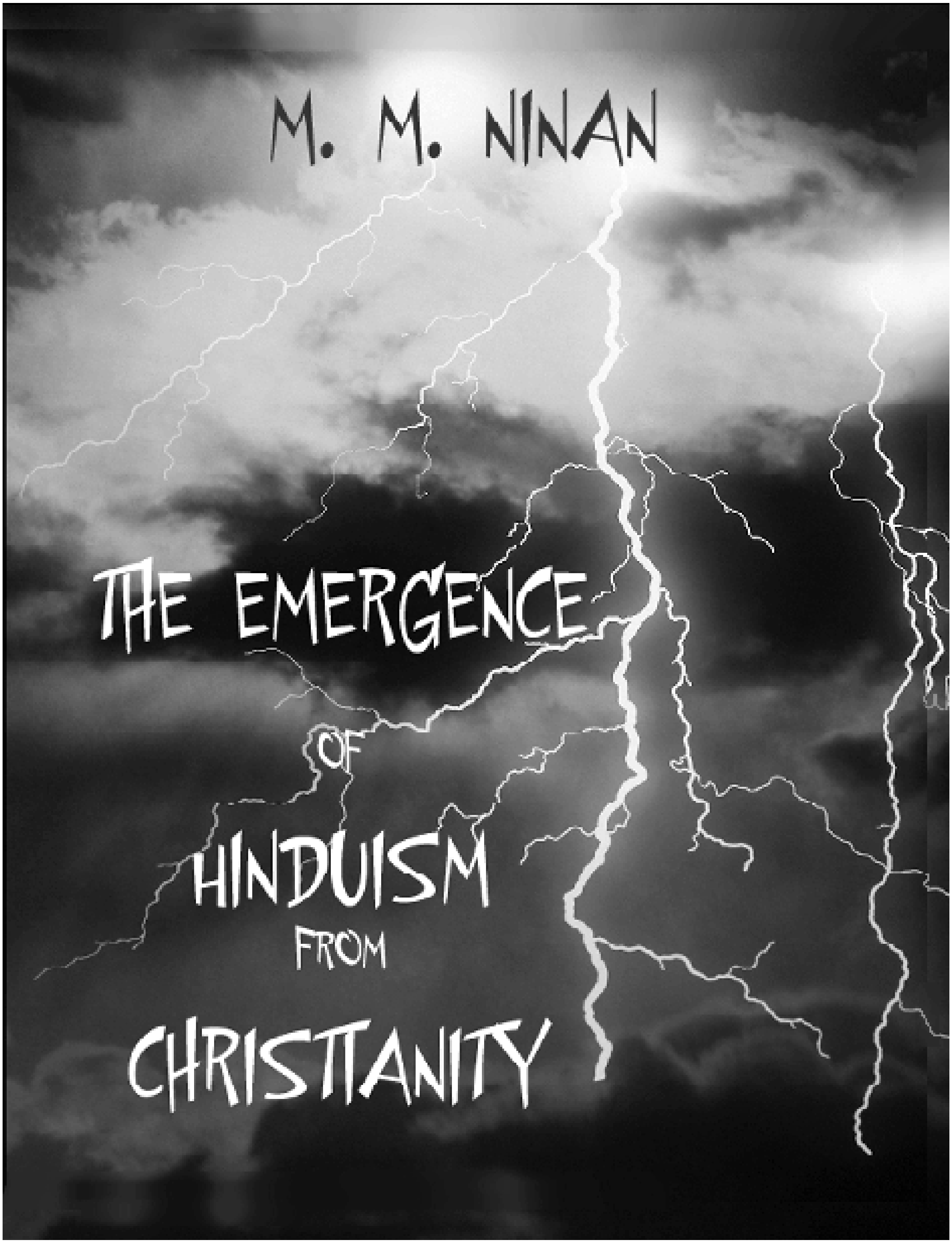

M. M. NINAN
THE EMERGENCE
OF
HINDUISM
FROM
CHRISTIANITY

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EMERGENCE OF HINDUISM FROM CHRISTIANITY

M. M. NINAN

CONTENTS

When St.Thomas came to the Kerala coast in India, he entrusted the gospel of Jesus – the Word made flesh - to four families to keep and to teach. Sankarapuri was one of them from which we trace our heritage.

Dedicated

to my wife

Ponnamma

and

to my children

Premeela, Ronnie

Neil, Anna

Preethy, Charley

Ajit , Jenny.

and to their descendants

"I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations."

"And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes."

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PREFACE

I am very much aware that what I am presenting is something that is diametrically opposite to most of the traditional understanding. I was pleasantly surprised when I discovered that I am not the only one that came to this conclusion. This realization led to the First International Conference on Early Christianity in India in New York last year, where this was the central theme of discussion. The sequel to that comes in the Second International Conference on Early Christianity in India at Chennai, India next year.

This book is an attempt to present the reasoning in simple terms for lay men and for easy reading. Since it is not an academic study, some rigor will be missing and references and links will be missed. The major reasoning is given in the body of the text while details and alternate views are given in boxes so that those who want to skip them can do so.

This book will set before you facts based on objective scientific researches in history, archaeology, architecture, linguistics, and written documentations about the facts of Indian History during the period immediately after the Mission of St.Thomas in India. While in the ongoing research in sciences, and correlating the scientific data with

history there is always room for alternatives. However all alternatives must be able to explain all known facts. There are obvious immovable markers in history. This obvious markers are ignored or simply masked by arbitrary definitions and assertions, which has little or no truth.

One of the ways in which truth is masked and perverted, is to mix it with untruth and transmit it through the powerful use of myths, legends and sheer repetition and exaggeration. These are essentially the tools of memorization used widely in Education. As generations go by the lies are transmitted as truth. In every generation, this attempt to pervert truth goes on, and we have come to a point where we no longer know what exactly happened in history even a few centuries ago.

Here are a few statements which everyone has come across and have come to accept as truth. These are statements taken directly from the World Wide Web.

1. The Vedic religion is the oldest religion in the world, dating back to at least 1.7 million years.
2. Hinduism is 50,000 years old
3. The Vedic scriptures are the oldest known to man, dating back to at least 1.7 million years.
4. Sanskrit is at least 3,500 years old.
5. Rama lived over twenty thousand years ago.

The fact is that, none of these claims can, even remotely, supported by any objective evidence. It is one thing to claim big, and altogether different to substantiate with evidences.

I do make several claims which seem outrageous. But they are all based on sound verifiable facts of history, archealogy, architecture, linguistics and clear written documentations. These conclusions are inevitable results of the evidences. Myths and legends are interpreted in terms of these available data. The following are essentially the facts:

1. Hinduism did not exist before the second century, A D.
2. Sanskrit did not exist before the second century AD,
3. There were no "Hindu Temples" before the second century AD.
4. The name Krishna did not even exist before the third century AD.
5. Idols (Vigrahas) did not appear in India before the third century AD and in Kerala until the eighth century AD.
6. St. Thomas, - Judas Thomas – one of the disciples of Jesus known commonly as the doubting Thomas came down to India and had a successful ministy all over India and China.

My conclusions from all these basic realities are:

1. Earliest forms of Hinduism was indeed Thomas Christianity with Isa as the center of worship.
2. Gnostic infilteration from Syria, the syncretic forces of the then existing religions of India (viz. Vedism, Budhism, Jainism and the local fertility cults) created the Gnostic religion of India. Later the Theosophical Society from America and the Indian Indpendence Movement gave impetus to redefine and form the present day form of religion known as Hinduism.

Hinduism as it exists today has its origin from the Thomas Ministry and it is simply the Gnostic form of Thomas Christianity. This takeover of Historic Christianity by the Gnostics under the Persian Gnostics occurred around the third century in the Inner India and took much later (eighth century) in Kerala Coast. In Kerala Christianity survived longer in power, just because of its constant contact with the rest of the Christendom. After the third century the two religions, Historic Christians and Gnostic Hinduism grew further and further apart. The Hinduism of today is the result of a long process of Gnostic growth as is repeated in the New Age phenomena in America today.

These are inevitable conclusions of the historical realities.

My gratitudes are to the Institute of Asian Studies, Chennai, which encouraged me, especially its director Dr. John Samuel. I must mention six names whose research stands as firm grounds on which I could build: Prof. M.Witzel of Cambridge University, Dr. Alexander Harris (on Sanskrit), Dr. Deva Kala, (Savism &Vaishnavism) Dr. Deva Nayakam, Prof. George Menacheri (Kerala Christians) and my cousin brother Late Dr. T. V. Phillip. I am indebted to them.

M.M.Ninan

San Jose CA

July 2006

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THE ACTS OF THOMAS

On the mount of Olive Jesus gave his disciples a commission, which was to go into the entire world and to preach the gospel. The Acts of the Apostles starts from there. However, the rest of the Bible speaks mostly about Paul and Peter.

What happened to the other disciples?

We know that they went throughout the rest of the known world of that time, but we do not have any definite record of their activities. Their evangelization certainly must have

been as fruitful as the ministry of Peter and Paul. The Bible, as we have, contains only the first phase of the expansion of The Way. (I use the word "Way" because that was how it was known initially.) The New Testament then describe how the Way expanded into Jerusalem, Samaria and then into the Greco-Roman Culture since these were areas close to the origin and were easily heard and known. Other Apostles had a difficult time, since their journey took them into the uttermost parts of the world, and no reporters went with them.

As such, we will have to look elsewhere for the Acts of other Apostles and the logical place to look for them is in the areas where they labored. In most cases, we do not really have a complete account of their activities in documentation. Writing was a skill unknown to common man in those days, and so the history of these churches were never put in writing during the period of their activities. It sometimes took several centuries of delay before they were put in writing. Because of the lack of documentation, in olden days, the history was transmitted orally in the form of stories, legends, ballads, and myths. Moses who was skilled in the art of writing trained in Egypt knew that the best way of transmission of history was through ballads and songs. ("Deu. 31:22 So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the people of Israel.") These are less reliable than documentations, but then these were the next best thing possible. Because of the distortions and embellishments that are necessary part of these literary forms, these forms of transmission are unreliable and must be treated with care.

Available Extra Biblical Sources.

Acts of Thomas
AD 200-222
By
Bardesan
the Syrian Philosopher – Poet

Fortunately, in the case of Thomas, we have a written record in the "Acts of Thomas." This was written around 200 AD – over a century after the fact. The Poet Philosopher Bardesan of Syria. (155-223 AD) is considered to be the author of this work.

Bardesanes was born in 154 CE, became a Christian c. 180 CE, and died in 222/223 CE.

Bar-Daisan **(Catholic Encyclopedia)**

At the age of twenty-five he happened to hear the homilies of Hystaspes, the Bishop of Edessa; he received instruction, was baptized, and even admitted to the dioconate or the priesthood. …..when Abgar IX, the friend of his youth, ascended the throne (179) he took his place at court.

His acceptance of Christianity was perfectly sincere; nor do later stories, that he left the Catholic Church and joined the Valentinian Gnostics out of disappointed ambition, deserve much credit. His royal friend became the first Christian king; and both king and philosopher labored to create the first Christian State. Bardesanes showed great literary activity against Marcion and Valentinus, the Gnostics of the day. But unfortunately, with the zeal of a convert anxious to use his previous acquirements in the service of the newly found truth, Bardesanes mixed his Babylonian pseudo-astronomy with Christian dogma and thus originated a Christian sect, which was vigorously combated by St. Ephrem.

Eusebius of Caesarea writes of Bardesanes

In the same reign, as heresies were abounding in the region between the rivers, a certain Bardesanes, a most able man and a most skillful disputant in the Syriac tongue, having composed dialogues against Marcion's followers and against certain others who were authors of various opinions, committed them to writing in his own language, together with many other works. His pupils, of whom he had very many (for he was a powerful defender of the faith), translated these productions from the Syriac into Greek.

Among them there is also his most able dialogue On Fate, addressed to Antoninus, and other works which they say he wrote on occasion of the persecution which arose at that time. He indeed was at first a follower of Valentinus, but afterward, having rejected his teaching and having refuted most of his fictions, he fancied that he had come over to the more correct opinion. Nevertheless he did not entirely wash off the filth of the old heresy. About this time also Soter, bishop of the Church of Rome, departed this life.

J. Quasten writes (*Patrology*, vol. 1, pp. 263-264):

While all other writings perished, the dialogue *Concerning Fate* or *Book of the Laws of the Countries*, which Eusebius mentions, survived in its original Syriac. The author, however, is not Bardesanes but his disciple Philip, although Bardesanes is the chief speaker in the dialogue, who answers the questions and problems of his followers regarding the characters of men and the position of the stars. According to Ephrem the Syrian Bardesanes is the creator of Syrian hymnody, because he composed one hundred and fifty hymns in order to spread his doctrine. His success was so tremendous that Ephrem in the second half of the fourth century had to combat this sect of Bardesanes by composing hymns himself. Some scholars were of the opinion that the beautiful poem, *The Hymn of the Soul*, in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* (cf. above, page 139) was composed by Bardesanes. But this remains very doubtful, especially since the contents of this famous hymn do not show any sign of Bardesanian Gnosis. The Arab Ibn Abi Jakub in his list of sciences entitled *Fihrist* from the end of the tenth century attributes to Bardesanes three other writings, of which one dealt with *Light and Darkness*, a second with *The Spiritual Nature of Truth*, and a third with *The Movable and the Immovable*.

Fragments and copies of this work is available in Syriac (or Aramaic), Coptic (or Ethiopic) and Latin. Translations are also available freely over the internet. Bardesanes has traveled widely in many different countries including India especially in the South Indian regions where Christianity was the major religion of the period. Since this is a story in the form of poetry, it is heavily embellished with exaggerations, complete with talking Serpents and Dragons. These were normal poetic forms of the period. However, the historical settings are properly set and the events and persons are true. At any rate, we do not have anything else to go by except the legends and ballads that are handed down through generations in Kerala. These concur with the Acts of Thomas Stories in historical and geographic details. Considering the situations connected with other Apostles, this is very comfortable.

We do have several ballads in Malayalam, which are claimed to have been handed down through generations but were not written down until around of the sixteenth century or even later. These traditions are contained in the following sources:

1 The Song of the Deacon – the Chapter on Thomas known to us as "Rambaan Pattu – Thoma Parvam"

Rambaan (Deacon) Thomas of Malayakal family was one of the first Deacons ordained by St, Thomas around AD 62. This was during Thomas's second visit to Kerala. Rambaan Thomas is said to have compiled this song and taught it while he was alive. This oral tradition was handed down as a folk song through generations. This tradition of transferring history through songs is an age-old method. Finally, in the 402nd generation of the first Rambaan Thomas, another Rambaan Thomas of that family, committed it in writing. That was in AD 1601. This therefore forms one of our sources. The historical contexts in these songs agree with other evidences and sources including the Acts of Thomas of AD 222.

Indian traditions in dramatized Stories, Ballads and Songs:

1. ***The song of Deacon***
2. ***The Dramas of the Way***
3. ***Songs of the Sons of the Great King***
4. ***Ballads sung by tribals***
5. ***Chavittu Nadakam – Tap Drama***

Summary of Rambaan Paattu

Thomas the Apostle coming from Arabia, landed in Maliankara (Maliankara is another name for present day Kerala region) in the year AD 50 in the month of December /January. After a short stay there he proceeded to Mailapuram (Mylapore) and from there went to China. Coming back to Mailapuram port he sailed to Maliankara being invited by the King of Thiruvanchikulam (modern Cranganore), and founded seven churches there: in Cranganore (where he arrived in AD 51 and baptized the King, 3000 pagans and 40 Jews), in Kollam, Chayal, Niranam, (to which place the cross was transferred from the infidel village of Trikpaleswaram), Kokkamangalam, Kottakayal (Parur) and Palayur. (These are the seven churches well known in tradition).

In AD 59 in the month of September/October he was called back to Mailapuram by King Cheran, who imprisoned him. …But the king's brother died at that time and was brought back to life and........... Thomas was set free and the king along with 700 received baptism.

After a stay of two and a half years in Mailapuram, the Apostle returned to Malabar via Malyattur and visited the old places: Cranganore, Kottakayal, staying in each place for a year and conferring on the faithful the sacrament of confirmation.

In Chayal, the Apostle took leave of the Christians, telling them that they would not see him again.

Then in the year AD 69, he departed from there to the land of the Tamils. At this point, the poem enumerates the miracles performed by the Apostle: he brought back to life 19 dead, drove the devil out of 260, etc...

In all he converted 17750 persons, of whom 6850 were Brahmins, 2800 Kshatriyas, 3750 Vaisyas and 4250 Sudras...(These are the various castes in India) Kepa and Paul are said to have been consecrated bishops. Kepa belonged to the Cranganore royal family and he was set over Kerala. He took part in the burial of the Apostle.

Back in Milapuram in the year AD 72 on the 3rd day of Karkadakam (July), on the way to the Little Mount, he was pierced with a lance....

(The summary is adapted from Mundadan : History of Christianity, I, p.30-32 as given by Prof. George Menacheri).

2. The Morality Plays of the Christians. - The Drama of the Way known in Malayalam as "Margam Kali"

The second source is the many folk dramas performed year after year in churches through out Kerala. These are essentially morality plays that are intended to instruct and to create a sense of history. They were simple and direct presentations with intent to convey the basic roots of the Malabar Churches.



Originally, the Dance of the Way was performed by men. In modern times, it is performed by women.

3. The Songs of the Sons of the Great Kings : known in Malayalam as Maapilla Paattu.

There is still another set of ballads sung by Christians who were in early years were called Maha Pillai (Great Sons – short as Mapilla) or Princes. The origin of this name is of great interest and will be taken up later in the History of Kerala Christians. These songs were sung in groups in celebrations of the churches.

4. Songs on Stringed Instrument - Veeradian Pattu – Villadichan Pattu

Strangely enough there is another series of ballads that comes through a non-Christian tribal group which are sung in accompaniment of stringed instrument consisting simply of a bow strung with tight string called Villu.

All these were at least partially or fully documented with the encouragement of Portuguese Missions who arrived in Kerala by the 1600s.



Kerala Center in the US Celebrates India Independence Day & Onam 2003, when this Villadichan Pattu was presented.

5. Chavittu Nadakam : Tap Drama

Chavittu Nadakam is a folklore dance drama art practiced by Christians in some parts of Kerala state of south India. These were introduced by the Portugese in the 16th century following the Kathakali tradition in the temple art. These are modifications of the morality plays of Europe.

The main characters wear broached dress, headdress and crowns. The soldiers have hats with quills. The background music is supported by bells and drums. The stories

are mostly related to Christian history and Biblical stories. To emphasize the point, on occassions the actors tap on the floor in rhythm. Hence it came to be known as Tap Drama. It is very similar to what the Tap Dancers do these days.

The Malabar (Kerala) and Indian traditions are referred to by the early Church Fathers all through the history of the church. Among them are the following references:

Clement of Alexandria 3rd C AD (235)
Doctrine of the Apostles 3rd C AD Syria
Oriegen 3rd (185-254 AD) quoted in Eusebius Alexandria
Eusebius (early 4th cent.) Caesarea
St. Jerome (342-420 A.D.) about the mission of Pantaenus, to India .
St. Ephrem (306-373 A.D.),
St. Gregory of Nazianze (324-390 A.D.),
St. Ambrose (333-397 A.D.),
St. Jerome, St. Gregory of Tours (6th cent.)
Isidore of Seville (7th cent.)

From these traditions, we can roughly recreate the basic story, the route taken by Thomas and the areas of his labor. We should not insist on accuracy in dates, maps, and routes, because the calendars were only local and are difficult to transfer into our present AD scale; and maps were not really in existence at that time.

Travels of Thomas

According to all these traditions, Thomas traveled from Palestine along the Spice route with a merchant called Habban (Habban in Acts of Thomas, Apanna in some other traditions). This was to be expected because the Port of Muziris (Muchiri – the three-lipped Port) in the Malabar Coast had been a major commercial center of that period, trading in the exotic spices like Pepper and Ginger. These spices were in great demand in the Roman territories; and Rome did not spare any effort to make these routes safe and fast. After the discovery of Monsoon by the Roman seafarers, this travel took less than forty days. Ptolemy's mid-second century map of the world and

the third century *Tabula Peutingeriana* or Peutinger Table gives us a lot of insight. There were three possible entry points into India. The first one was into Indus River mouth (Barbarikor) in Punjab with direct entry to Taxila by River route. The second one is (Barygaza) near Bombay (Mumbai) in the Kalyan area, and the third into Kerala with the famous Muziris as the main port, near present day Cochin Harbor. The Kerala traditions claim that Thomas landed in Kerala and then moved on to Taxila. There are some scholars who differ and think that the Apostle landed in Taxila first and then came down to Kerala when the Indo-Parthian Kingdom of Taxila was destroyed.

This route took Apostle Thomas and Habban through Yemen where, Thomas established a church in Yemen that flourished for 6 centuries. It was destroyed around 600 AD at the onslaught of Islam. I make mention of this here simply because I have been privileged to be part of the Christian Church which came into existence in Yemen after 1200 years as its first Moderator.

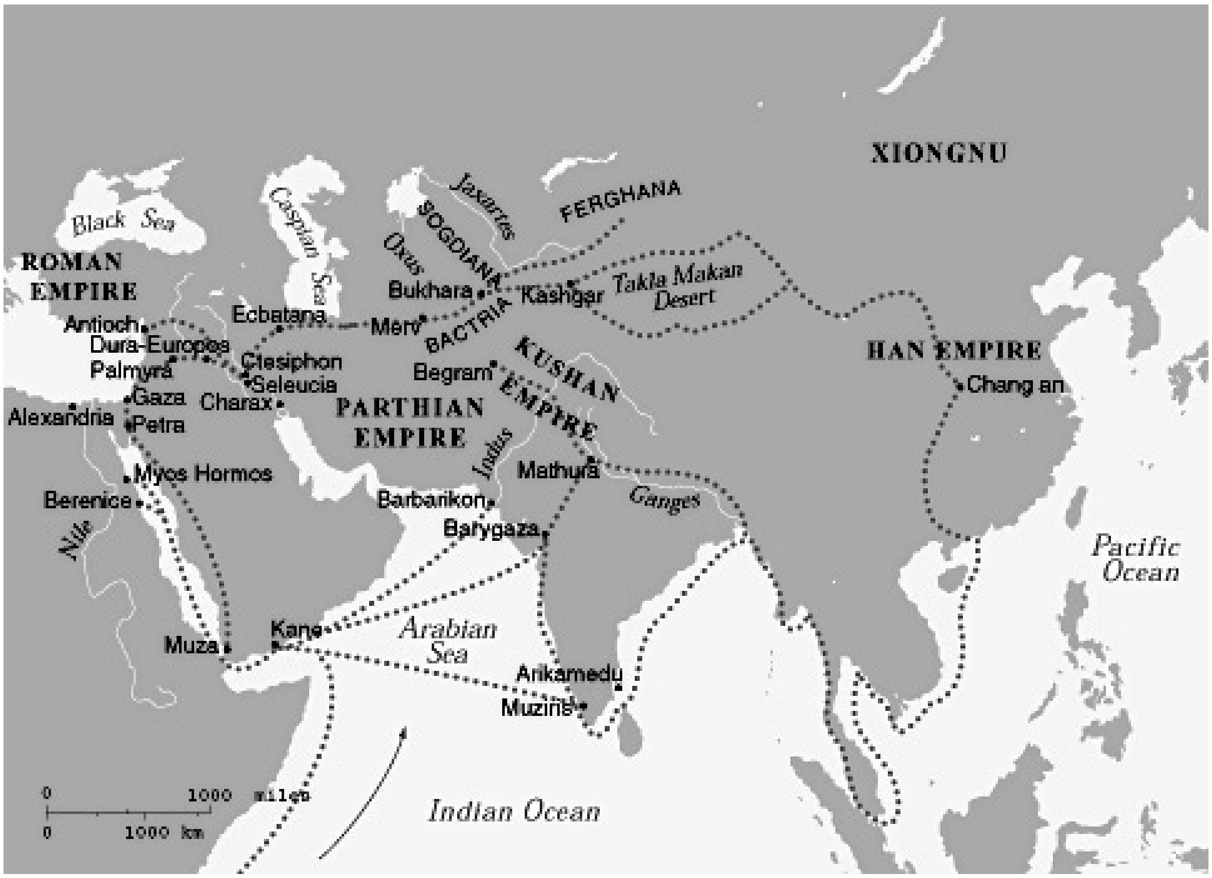
During his first week of stay in the Malabar Coast in the present day Kerala, he established one church among the Jewish community in that area. Then he traveled probably along the west coast by land or by sea route to the country of King Gondaphores whose capital was in Taxila. TAxils is in the region of Punjab, in modern Pakistan. Taxila (Taksha sila) was an Indo-Parthian Kingdom at that time and Habban was taking Thomas to build a palace for Gondaphores, the King of Taxila.

TAXILA

The city was called *Takshaçila*, which may be interpreted as 'prince of the serpent tribe'; in Pâli it was known as *Takkasilâ*; the Greeks knew the town as *Taxila*, which the Romans rendered as *Taxilla*; the Chinese called it *Chu-ch'a-shi-lo*. The ruins are some 30 kilometers northwest of modern Islamabad.

From the various versions of the stories, we cannot really establish whether Habban took Thomas directly to Taxila or whether he landed in Kerala first and then took the coastal route to Taxila. If the events of Taxila took place before his South Indian

Ministry Thomas must have landed around AD 48 there. Later when the Kingdom of Gondaphorus was destroyed, he took the sea route and came down to Kerala. Regardless of the actual sequence of events, Thomas landed in Kerala by AD 52.



The Commercial Routes of First Century

Andrapolis and Habban

Acts of Thomas mentions a city called Andrapolis where they landed before proceeding to Taxila the capital of Gondaphores. (The name Taxila is not mentioned there) Historians differ as to the exact location of Andrapolis, whether it was within India proper or a nearby place. In the story it is said that from Andrapolis, Abban and Thomas left for India. According to Warmington, Andrapolis was the capital of the Andhra Kingdom in Deccan and was in India. Habban probably is a corruption of popular Andhra name “Appanna”

Other Views on the route of Thomas

“Only in North West”

“On the basis of the *Acts of Thomas,* there are historians who argue that Thomas went only to the north west and they deny the south Indian tradition.

“Only in the South”

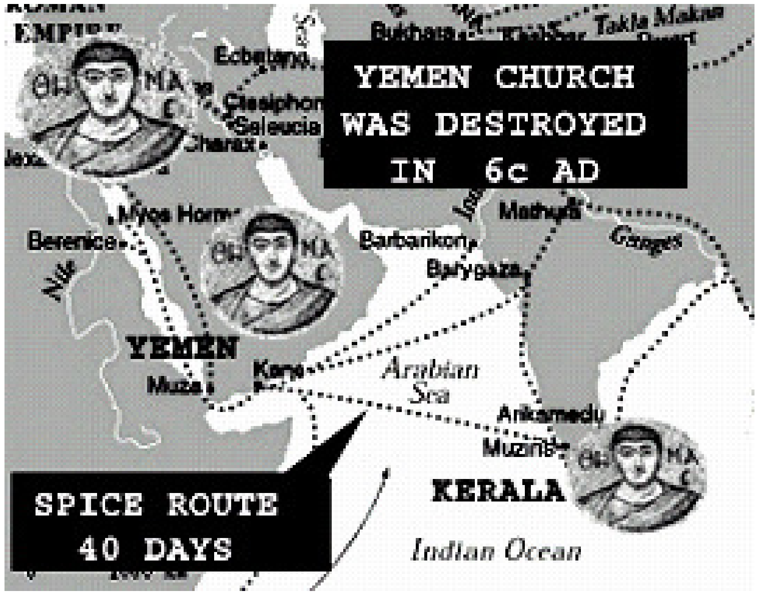
Then there are others, who deny the *Acts of Thomas* as a reliable historical source and accept only the south Indian tradition. They point out that we do not possess any concrete evidence for the early preaching of the Gospel in northwest India as we have for south India. They say that the south Indian claim to apostolate is supported by the fact that there is the community of St. Thomas Christians with their living tradition and the tomb of St. Thomas which is claimed to be that of the Apostle Thomas.

Both South and North

“There is a third group who argue for both places. Bishop Medlycott, H. Heras, J.N. Farquhar and S.H. Moffett are some of them. Medlycott thinks of two separate journeys, one from Palestine through Mesopotamia and Persia by land to north west India, the other, after a return to Palestine, via Egypt and Ethiopia and Socotra and thence across the Arabian Sea to Malabar. J.N. Farquhar thinks of one journey in the East. He says that St. Thomas first went to north western India travelling by sea and up the river Indus, but had to leave because of the Kushan invasions, which eventually wiped out the Christians of that region so that no trace remained. Then he left India by sea, landed in Socotra and spent some time there during which he made converts; and afterwards he sailed for India again and came to Malabar, from where in due course he crossed over to the east coast. He mentions that Thomas even went to Burma, and after returning to India he was martyred at Mylapore.”

East of the Euphrates: Early Christianity in Asia

by T.V. Philip



Route of St.Thomas from Palestine to Malabar Coast through Yemen along the Spice route. The most probable route according to Kerala Traditions.



Traditional site where St. Thomas landed - Cranganore (Kodungallur) in Malabar Coast -in 52 AD. Here he preached to a Jewish community who accepted mesia and their synagogue became a Christian church.



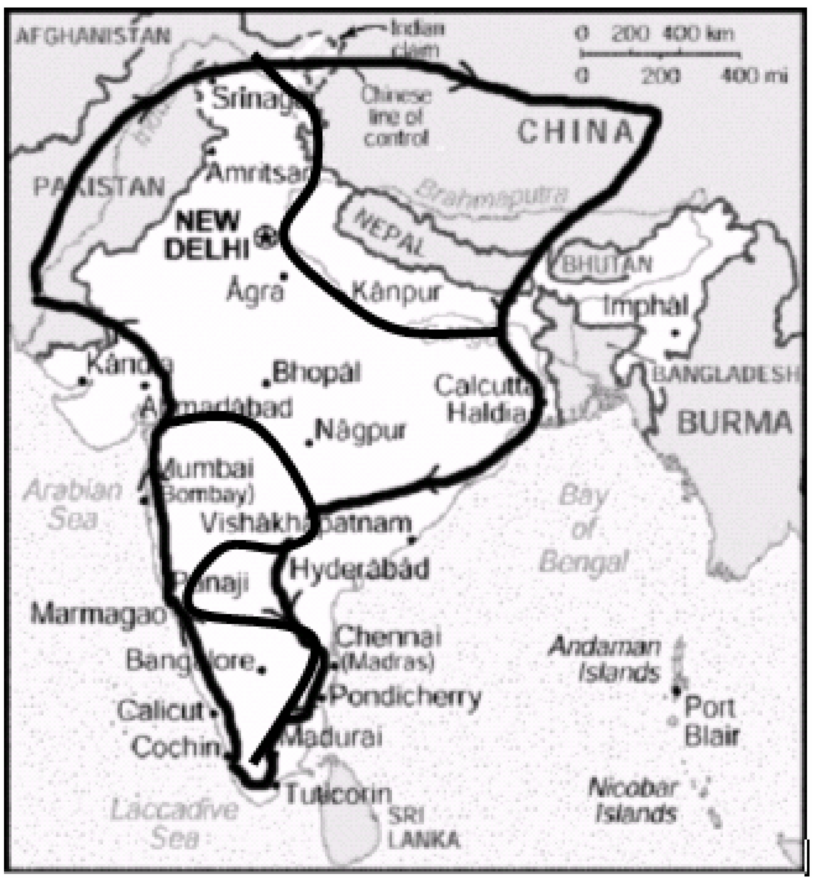
The Church in Cranganuur – near Muziris

The route of Thomas must have been along the west coast since we have a Christian community near Bombay, which claims its descent from Thomas. Thus having reached Taxila and converting the King he traveled as far as China. From there he entered India crossing the Himalayas and reached the Ganges plains and then onto Central India.

We have strong documentations, showing the existence of a Christian community in the area around the river Kaveri in central India. From there he traveled south into Madras and Kerala reaching Kerala a second time around 62 AD. According to Kerala traditions, he established eight churches. The names and places of these churches are known even today as the Thomas Christian cherishes their heritage.

One of the main problems in accepting the stories connected with Thomas were the lack of any information regarding a King called Gondaphores (Gondophernes). However in 1854 a large collection of coins were unearthed showing clearly the existence of the Kingdom and he even had a brother called Gad as given in the stories. An epigraphic stone in a nearby Buddhist community center also corroborates this conclusion. We now know that about the year 46 A.D., a king named Gondophernes or

Guduphara was reigning over that part of Asia south of Himalayas. This region is now in the area known as Afghanistan, Baluchistan, the Punjab, and Sind, a part of Pakistan. From the Takht-i-Bahi inscription, we can deduce that King Gundaphara probably began to reign around 20 A.D. and reigned probably until 54 AD. The exact dates are difficult to establish. I am keeping the traditional date of AD 52 for the landing of Thomas. There are reasons for believing that the kingdom of "Mazdai" as mentioned in the "Acts of Thomas" may well be an Iranian attempt in pronouncing an Indian name. It will probably represent a certain King Vasudeva of Mathura, a successor of Kanishka.



Probable land route of Thomas during his 20-year ministry within India
(52 – 72 AD)



Ruins of Taxila

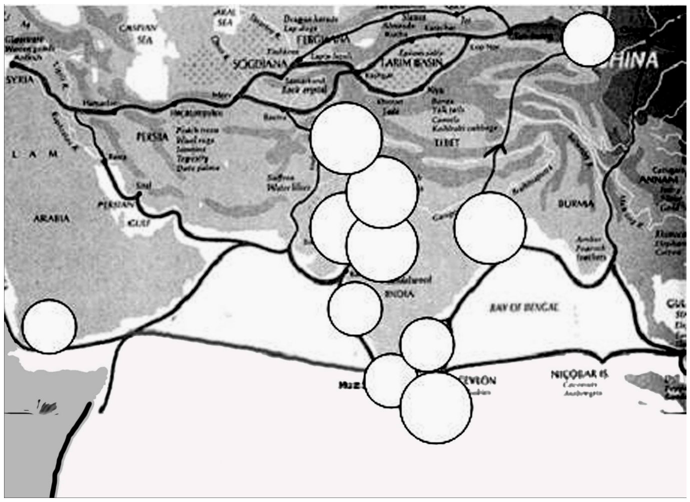
Vestiges of North Indian Christian Churches

“Bardaisan in his Book of Fate (AD 196) speaks of Parthian Christians living among pagans, which might be a result of the destruction of the Indian Parthian empire by Kushan invaders about AD 50.

There are also said to be Christian tribes still living in north India, but holding their faith a secret from all others. For example, at Tatta in Sind (the ancient port of Pattiala at the mouth of Indus), there is a fakir community which calls itself by an Aramaic name, something like ‘Bartolmai’, and claims to have been descended from St. Thomas’s converts and to have books and relics to prove it.”

T.V.Phillip

In general, we have no reason not to believe the story as given by the traditions. We cannot exactly trace the cris-crossing intertwined routes of Thomas over the 20 years. We are however certain that Thomas visited Kerala twice and he might have visited China at least once. It evidently covered the entire Indian continent - North and South, East and West. Below is a map showing the possible areas of the ministry of Thomas based on the trade routes of the period and taking into consideration the placement of early Christian churches for which we have definite evidence...



The extent of the ministry of Thomas

ACTA THOMA

The fanciful legendary material of much of the *Acts*, which approaches the genre of Romance, as well as some of its unmistakably unorthodox theology, made its historicity dismissible for many centuries. "Gondophares" was dismissed as an invention.

Then in 1854 General Alexander Cunningham reported (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* vol.xxiii. pp.679-712) that since the British had been in Afghanistan an estimated 30,000 coins bearing Greek and Indian legends had been found in Afghanistan and the Punjab. The mintings covered three centuries after the conquests of Alexander: coins in the hoards were minted for Scythian conquerors and for Parthian kings such as Gondophares, who thereby emerged from pious legend into history (Medlycott 1905).

A votive inscription of the 26th year of Gudavhara or Gondophares, is reported to have been found on a stone at Takht-i-Bahi, northeast of Peshawar with a date in the year 103 of an unspecified era reckoning. This era is likely to have been the Malva or Vikrama era, founded in 57 BCE, this would give a date of 20 CE for his ascension. The stone was formerly in the museum at Lahore.

The Indo-Parthian kingdom with its capital at Kabul barely lasted one century. It started to fragment under Gondophares' successor Abdagases I. The eastern part was conquered by the Kushans around 75 CE.

Kingdom of Gondaphores

Parthia (Old Persian Parthava): satrapy of the ancient Achaemenid Empire, the north-east of modern Iran.

Parthian was an Iranian language written in the Aramaic alphabet**.** It had an enormous number of words and even phrases that were borrowed from Aramaic**,** and scribal training was necessary to learn these; Syriac**,** being a Semitic language. Hence, Thomas must have been at ease with the language.

The Parthian empire occupied all of Iran proper, as well as the modern countries of Iraq, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, eastern Turkey, eastern Syria, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan,Tajikistan, Pakistan, Kuwait, the Persian Gulf coast of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. The end of this loosely organized empire came in 224 CE, when the last king was defeated by one of the empire's vassals, the Persians of the Sassanid dynasty.

During the 1st century BCE, the Parthians started to make inroads into eastern territories that had been occupied by the Indo-Scythians and the Yuezhi. The Parthians gained control of parts of Bactria and extensive territories in northern India, after defeating local rulers such as the Kushan Empire ruler Kujula Kadphises, in the Gandhara region.

Around 20 CE, Gondophares, one of the Parthian conquerors, declared his independence from the Parthian empire and established the Indo-Parthian Kingdom in the conquered territories. His Capital was at Taxila.

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia 11 March 2006 01:15 UTC



Coin of Gondophares (20-50 CE), king of the Indo-Parthian Kingdom.
Obverse: Bust of Gondophares and Greek legend: ΒΑCΙΛΕΩC CΩΤΗΡΟC ΥΝΔΟΦΕΡΡΟΥ "King Gondophares, the Saviour".
Reverse: Winged Nike holding a diadem, with a Kharoshti legend: MAHARAJASA GUDAPHANISA TRATARASA "King Gondophares, the Saviour".



King Gondophores (British Museum, London)



Takthi-Bahi Stone, which says:
Maharaja-raja-raja-samahatha –dramia- devawratha Gundaphorasa

This stone writing was found in the nearby
Buddhist Vihar in a place called Takthi Bahi.



Gold coin of Vasudeva I.
Obv: Vasudeva in tall helmet, holding a scepter, and making an offering over an altar. Legend in Kushan language and Greek script "Shaonanoshao Bazodeo Koshano" which means: "King of kings, Vasudeva the Kushan".
Rev: Indian god "Oesho" (Easow) holding a trisula (Trinity) scepter, with the bull. Is this Jesus?
Monogram ("tamgha") to the left.

Vaseduva may have been the Indian king who returned the relics of the Apostle St. Thomas from India in 232 CE. It was probably during this time the poetic work of "Acts of Thomas" was written. The relics were transfered triumphally to the town of Edessa, Mesopotamia. The Indian king is named as "Mazdai" in Syriac sources, "Misdeos" and "Misdeus" in Greek and Latin sources, has been connected to the "Bazdeo" on the Kushan coinage of Vasudeva, the transition between "M" and "B" being a current one in Classical sources for Indian names. The martyrologist Rabban Sliba dedicated a special day to both the Indian king, his familly, and St Thomas:

> *"Coronatio Thomae apostoli et Misdeus rex Indiae, Johannes eus filius huisque mater Tertia"* ("Coronation of Thomas the Apostole, and Misdeus king of India, together with his son Johannes (thought to be a Latinization of *Vizan*) and his mother Tertia") Rabban Sliba. (Mario Bussagli, "L'Art du Gandhara", p255)

Vasudeva I (Kushan: ΒΑΖΟΔΗΟ "Bazodeo", Chinese: 波調 "Bodiao") was a Kushan emperor around 164-200 CE. He was the last great Kushan emperor, and the end of his rule coincides with the invasion of the Sassanians as far as northwestern India, and the establishment of the Indo-Sassanians or Kushanshahs from around 240 CE.

2

RELIGIONS OF INDIA WHEN THOMAS ENTERED INDIA

When Thomas entered India, there were three major religions on the scene.

1. The Aryan Vedic Religion.
2. Buddhism
3. Jainism

It would be necessary to know the basic belief system of these three religions to appreciate what Thomas did.

The Three main religions When Thomas entered India were

1. ***Aryan Vedic Religion (Nature Worshippers)***
2. ***Buddhism (Anti-theistic)***
3. ***Jainism (Non-theistic)***

Vedic Religion (13C BC)

Vedic Religion is what the Aryans brought into India from their original homelands.

Who were the Aryans? Despite the recent attempt by the Indian Hindu extremists to establish that Aryans originated from India,

there is no evidence to indicate any such fact historically, linguistically or archeologically. The Aryans were nature worshippers. Zoroastrians –the sun and fire worshippers - claim themselves as Aryans. Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, and other Persian Kings claimed that they were Aryans. (The Parsees of India are the descendants of these Kings who migrated to India under Islamic persecution). According to Zoroastrian Sacred book, "Zend Avesta," the original abode of these people was the Polar Regions of Siberia. They moved to the Middle East because of increasing coldness of the region. Another group arrived in the region over the sea from Camphtor. Still another group arrived from Sub Saharan desert according to some scholars. This mixed race was known as Hittites. The Indian Aryans are the descendants of Hittites. They were warriors and had no written language. They were good at storytelling and worshipped the forces of nature. They retained there stories and ideals through songs and ballads. During the invasion of Canaan by Israel under Commander Joshua, these Hittites were forced to move out of their land. This is exactly the time (around 1300 BC) when Aryan migration to India took place. Just as Israelites massacred the Canaanites, Aryans massacred Dravidian Indians. The conquest of India must have taken several centuries. By the 7th C BC (or by 2nd C BC at least), they were even in Sri Lanka, conquering the Giant King Ravana. However, they were not able to control south India and only had a weak presence in those areas. Today the Brahmin families in Kerala can claim their descent only after sixth C. AD. Something happened to the Brahmins in Kerala between the second Century BC and sixth Century AD. The reason for their disappearance will be clear when the Thomas story unfolds.

Vedic Religion is not Hinduism.

Vedic religion was not Hinduism, as we know today. There are four Vedas (Sacred Scriptures) in Hinduism today. If which only the Rig Veda was in existence at the time Thomas entered India in written form. Additionally, the

Rig Veda was not written in Sanskrit but in Vedic or Avestan, which is a form of Persian.

> **"Vedic Hinduism" is a contradiction *in terminis***
> **since Vedic religion is very different from what we generally call "Hindu religion",**
> **- at least as much Old Hebrew religion is from medieval and modern Christian religion."**
> *S.W.Jamison and M.Witzel*
> *Vedic Hinduism 1992*
> *Sanskrit Department, Cambridge University*

These portions of Rig Veda were written down only by the 2nd C BC.

Chapters II and X and other three Vedas are written in Sanskrit and are of later Post Christian Period. We will deal with this later, as they are very important in our study.

The hymns of Rig Veda were simply psalms to their nature gods – 33 gods can be counted including the later Vedic gods. However, none of these gods are found among the gods of Hinduism today. It is thus evident that though in order to push the date of heritage, Hinduism claim that Vedism was the start of Hinduism, the fact remains that there is very little relation between them. This is a critical issue and the fact will emerge as we deal other areas of study. The Pre-Christian Vedic religion had absolutely no concept of a God of gods or of a supreme God.

An example of the Vedic Psalm.

RIG VEDA : HYMN II. Vayu.

1 BEAUTIFUL Vayu, come, for thee these Soma drops have been prepared: Drink of them, hearken to our call.
2 Knowing the days, with Soma juice poured forth, the singers glorify Thee, Vayu, with their hymns of praise.
3 Vayu, thy penetrating stream goes forth unto the worshipper, Far-spreading for the Soma draught.
4 These, Indra-Vayu, have been shed; come for our offered dainties' sake: The drops are yearning for you both.
5 Well do ye mark libations, ye Vayu and Indra, rich in spoil So come ye swiftly hitherward.
6 Vayu and Indra, come to what the Soma. presser hath prepared: Soon, Heroes, thus I make my prayer.
7 Mitra, of holy strength, I call, and foe-destroying Varuna, Who make the oil-fed rite complete.
8 Mitra and Varuna, through Law, lovers and cherishers of Law, Have ye obtained your might power
9 Our Sages, Mitra-Varuna, wide dominion, strong by birth, Vouchsafe us strength that worketh well.

Translated by Ralph T.H. Griffith

===

Vayu = Air Indra =Thunderbolt Mitra =Friend Varuna = Sun

"The Vedic Aryans invoked gods, especially Indra, Varuna, Agni, Vayu, Mitra, Aditya, Pushan, Asvins, Usha etc, performed yagnas and other rituals to supplicate them, invoke them, and seek their approval, guidance and help for their material comforts, personal gains, general welfare, appeasement of nature and victory over hostile tribes."
V.Jayaram , History of Hinduism: The Beginnings, Hinduism Website.com

Buddhism (5c BC)

Buddhism is unique amongst the religions of the world because it does not have any place for God in its aspiration for the ultimate redemption. Buddhism goes beyond most of the other religions in that it is positively anti-theistic, because the very notion of God conflicts with some principles, which are fundamental to the Buddhist view of the world and the role of humans in it. The Buddha argues that the three most commonly given attributes of God, viz. omnipotence, omniscience, and benevolence towards humanity cannot all be mutually compatible with the existential fact of dukkha – the existence of suffering. "The fate of the world depends on causes and conditions. Therefore the wise man may not rely on gods," wrote Nargarjuna the Indian Buddhist philosopher of the second C AD. What controls the world is simply the Cause – Effect process. It is simple science. God has no place in the scheme.

Buddhism is positively anti-theistic.

"Existence of suffering can only be explained with Cause and Effect."

"Man cannot rely on gods."

Buddhism underwent lot of theological transformations in the later period. It essentially started as a materialistic religion based on reincarnation. Incidentally, the concept of reincarnation is not found in the Vedas – in any of the Vedas. It was not an Aryan concept at all. The Reincarnation concept came into Indian religious scenario probably through the Greek influence. Later during its contact with Thomas Christianity in China, Buddhism took a new form known as Mahayana Buddhism (Higher Vehicle) with theistic notions. The Southern group known as Hinayana Buddhism (Lower Vehicle) is still vigorously atheistic. A third school called Vajrayana or the "Diamond Vehicle" is essentially based on mantra and tantra art of esoteric concentration.

Jainism (5c BC)

Jainism is again a materialistic religion. It assumes the totality of the Universe as eternally dependant and is self-maintained with its own eternal rules. It assumes no God beyond the existence of the intelligent beings and life entities. There is a hierarchy of life forms in the universe. It is the interaction between these entities living and non-living that constitute life in progress.

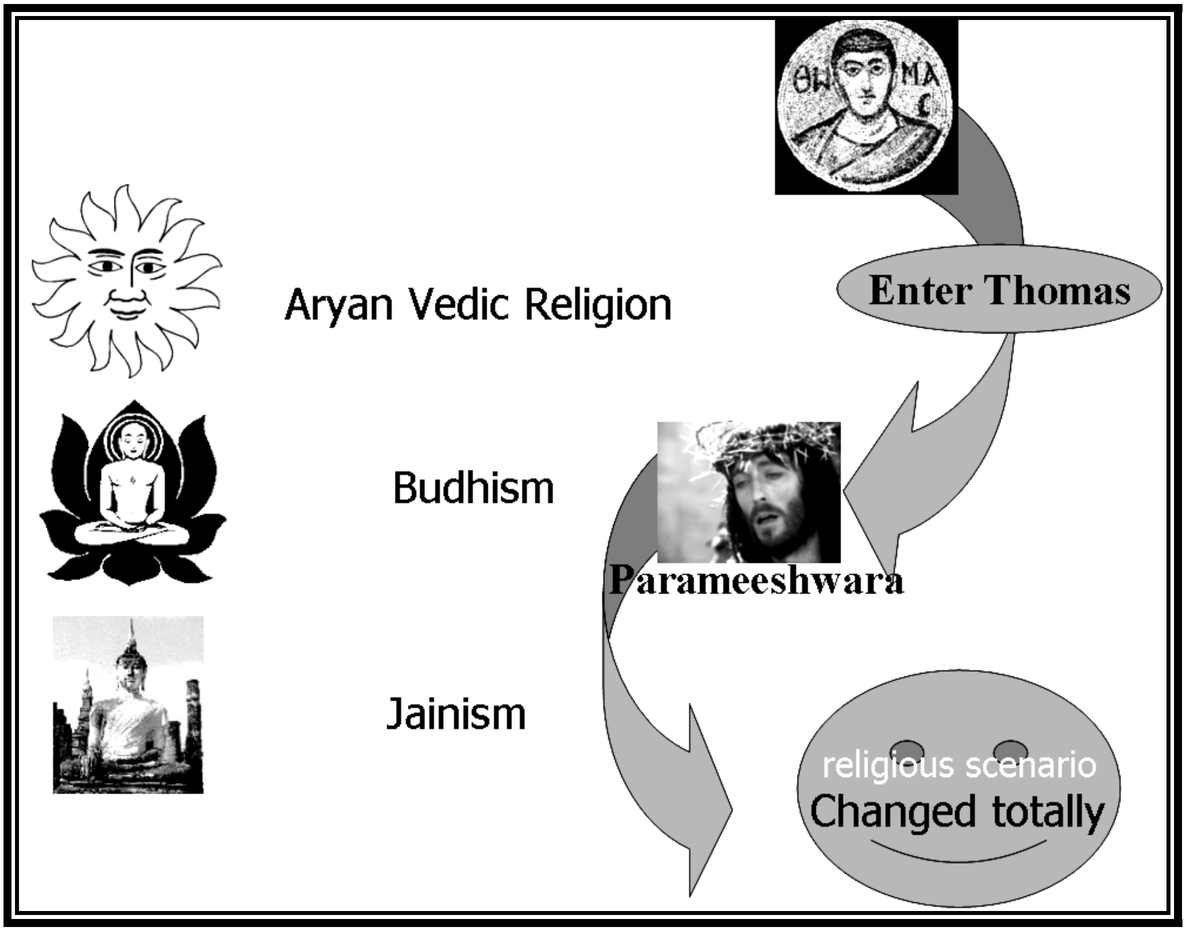
In Jainism
there are higher beings called arhats in heaven and
also beings with greater freedom and higher degree of knowledge and intelligence in cosmos.
They are not gods.

“Know that the world is uncreated, as time itself is, without a beginning and without an end... Uncreated and indestructible, it endures under the compulsions of its own nature, divided into three sections- hell, earth and heaven."

Among the intelligent beings, there are various levels of existence. There are higher beings called arhats in heaven and embodied souls but with greater freedom and high degree of knowledge and intelligence. However, they are not gods.

Local Religions

There might have been other forms of local religions in various parts of India in addition to the three major religions as well. There are evidences that indicate the Dravids who were the creators of ancient Mohen Jodero civilizations and who today occupy the Southern part of India are the descendants of Abraham through his third wife Keturah. Bible indicates that these children were send to the East when Isaac was given his inheritance. DNA evidences do concur in this regard.



Into this spiritual vacuum without a God, Thomas brought in the concept of Parameswara –the Most High God - and his incarnation as Man in the person of Nazarene and he transformed India totally.

Parameshwara. [Iswara is God. Param means Most High.]
The prescript *Param* can be replaced with *Maha* meaning "The Great" to give *Maheshwara* – The Great God.
These words Parameswara and Maheswara occur in Indian religious scenario only after the first century.

This was very new to the Indian continent. It transformed all the religions of India – Vedism, Buddhism, and even Jainism to some extent. The idea that there is a Personal God who is Omnipotent and loving changed the whole theology of Indian continent as the later religious scenario shows. The extent of this impact indicates that Thomas established churches with Jesus as center of worship as the Parameshwara throughout India.

Thomas' journey covered the whole of India for two whole decades, very similar to the travels of Paul. Paul transformed the Greco-Roman world into Christian faith. Did Thomas achieve the same? There are indications even today to show that he did just that. Scattered groups of Christian sects can be found all along the route of Thomas, claiming their root from Thomas. From Malabar Coast (In South India) Thomas traveled along the West coast to Kalyan, (Bombay) and then onto Sind (Pakistan) and Tibet returning along the East cost through Kaveri area to Mylapore ("The city of Peacock", Madras, South India.) They are there even today. Some of them remain as secret communities in the face of later persecution.

Sufficient records are there to show that:

* There existed a thriving Christian community in Kerala at that time.

There are palm leaf records, which show that:

* Among the Dravidians in Central India (Kaveri Area)
there was a Church as early as 293 AD. These documents show that, Seventy-Two families of Christians of Vellala origin from Kavery Poopatanam of Puhur District on the River Kaveri arrived in Kollam (Quilon) in Kerala as refugees fleeing from the persecution in AD 293.



Historically well-documented Christian Kingdom of Villarvattom Pana Dynasty (near the present-day Cochin) lasted nearly a millennium from 510 to 1439 AD, until the coming

of the Portuguese. There are documents indicating powerful Christian Kingdoms in Kerala, particularly in Ayr (referred to in Greek documents- Ayroor) and Ranni and Vel (Velnad). There must have been other major churches all over India other than in Kerala. However, the problem is "Where are they?" It is this question we are trying to answer. The basic reason why we do not see them is that we may be looking for the wrong clues and so we do not recognize them for want of familiarity.

The container changed, but the content remained

What are we really looking for?

- Church buildings similar to the Greek and Roman churches.
- Worship forms like the liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the Roman Churches
- Out stretched arms of Praise and Worship

We are simply assuming that these are the norms of the Christian Churches. It is these basic expectations that put us off track

3

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF THOMAS

Principles of Missiology

Before he ascended into Heaven, Jesus called together all his disciples and gave them the Great Commission to go and preach the gospel to all the nations. The gospel was presented to the disciples in the context of Jewish culture. However, the content of the Gospel was not Jewish, but universal. If God wants to speak to the people, he has to speak in the language understood by the people. Since there were a million languages among the people, God had to choose one language, which happened to be Jewish. After giving this Good News from Heaven, He told them to preach the gospel to all nations – Jesus said, "Translate the gospel to others."

"Translate the Gospel to others"

This is exactly what the disciples did; Early Christian Church was known as the Way. It was easy to establish the Way within the Jewish context, because Jesus himself did

most of the initial labor. However, it was not that easy to translate into other cultures and languages. It needed specialists. The structure, the institution, the building, the language, the liturgy, the mode of worship, mode of congregation and fellowship were all-different in other cultural contexts.

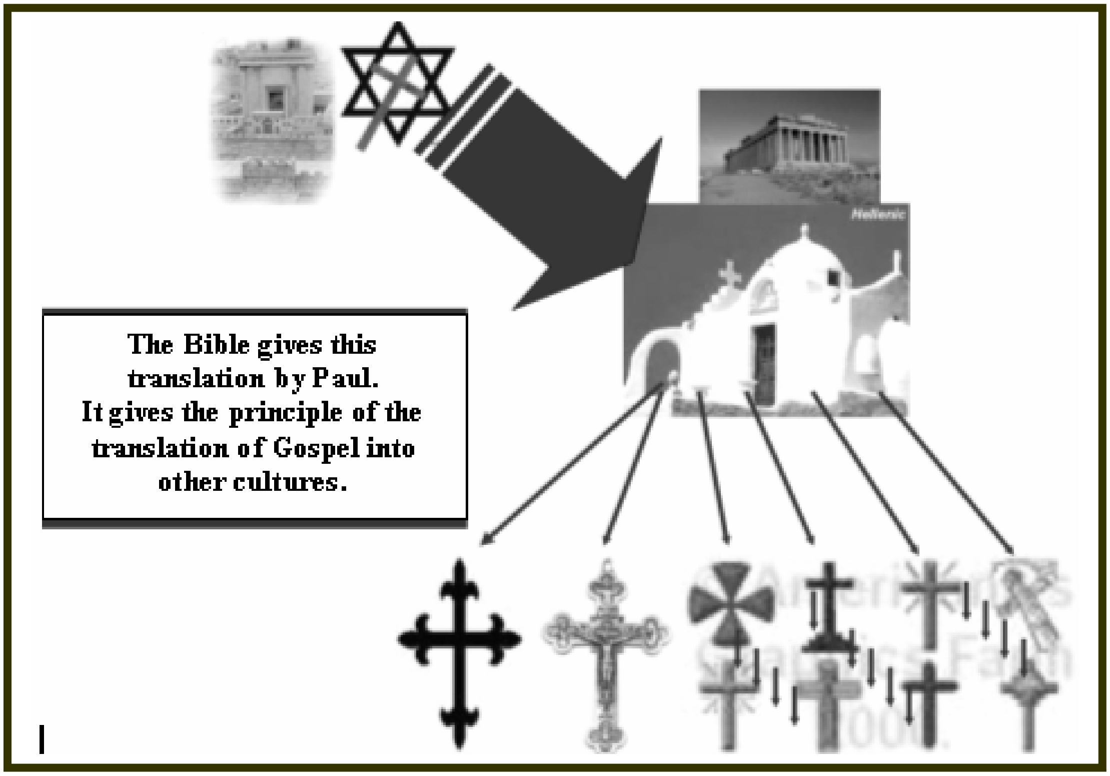
The Bible tells us the story of how this translation of Gospel from the Jewish culture into Greco-Roman culture took place and is a good exercise in the procedure and process. Paul a distinguished scholar in both the Jewish and Greco-Roman culture was elected for that purpose. This is recorded in detail for us in the Bible. This is still our model for evangelism and Mission.

We know how the Judaizers opposed any attempt to translate the Gospel into other cultures and it became necessary to call for the first Council of Churches in Jerusalem, which took place in AD 50. The Jerusalem Council put down the basic principles of Missiology. The Greco-Roman churches differed considerably from the Early Jewish Church. Even the name “The Way” was changed to “The Church.” The Cross was not even a symbol of Christianity in the early church, but it was for the Roman Churches. Though the languages and the symbolism changed, the gospel content - which is the doctrine of incarnation, the doctrine of salvation through faith etc. - remained unchanged. The container changed, but the content remained. Word took new flesh.

Today when we think of the Church, we think of the Greco-Roman Churches with its institution and interpretations and styles. We look for a church building with people gathering in pews and all such characteristics common to the Western Churches today. We think of a pastor or bishop before a congregation. However, these pertain to the context of the Early Roman and Greek situations. What would it look like in a different culture? The missions still struggle with it.

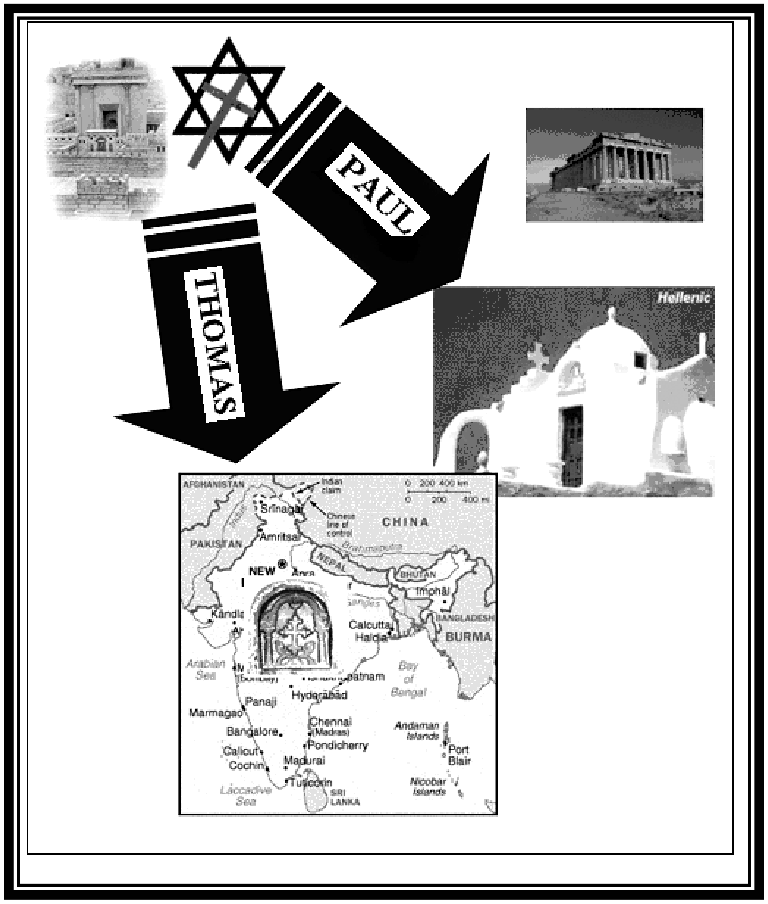
Thomas left for India after the first Council of Churches of Jerusalem and we can be sure he understood what it meant. So when he arrived in India, what type of church did

he institute? It certainly was not in the Greco-Roman style. We should not be surprised if it contained more Hebrew structure than Greek .

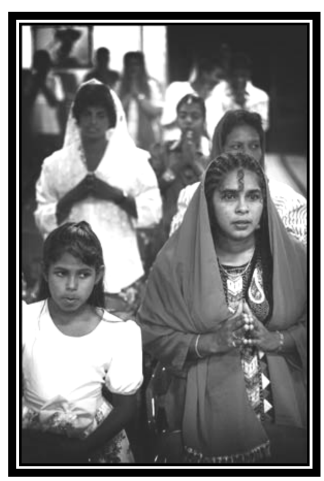


Thomas must have established culturally relevant forms of worship and liturgy and structures. These were truly Indian, translated "Hindu." Similar to the Roman Catholic Church or the Antiochian Universal (Catholic) Church, Indian church would be Indian Universal (Catholic) Way, which in Indian language will be "Hindu Sanadhana Dharma.

Thomas must have established culturally relevant forms of worship and liturgy


PAUL
THOMAS
Hellenic
AFGHANISTAN
CHINA
PAKISTAN
Srinagar
Amritsar
NEPAL
BHUTAN
Imphal
BANGLADESH
BURMA
Calcutta
Haldia
Arabian Sea
Bay of Bengal
Hyderabad
Panaji
Marmagao
Bangalore
Chennai (Madras)
Pondicherry
Calicut
Cochin
Madurai
Tuticorin
Laccadive Sea
SRI LANKA
Andaman Islands
Port Blair
Nicobar Islands









Could these be Christian forms?

In the study that follows, I am trying to present the modern scholarship on the sudden appearance of new forms of worship, structures, and concept of faith in India as the Indian Catholic Church. This is the birth of Hindu Sanadhana Dharma.

New forms of worship appeared all of a sudden soon after the Ministry of Thomas. These are still found in modern Hinduism.

The Early Hindu Sanadhana Dharma of India was indeed the Thomas Christian Church. Later, like in all the other countries, it gave rise to denominations. There were new emphasis, new revivals, and varying interpretations. Saivism and Vaishnavism were probably two such denominations of Indian Christianity as Dr. Deva Nayagom and Dr. Deva Kala explain. In the historical development, these denominations ridiculed each other, made up stories that were abusive, misinterpreting and caricaturing the other and persecuted each other. (These are reminiscent of the Catholic – Protestant persecutions) Still later heretic developments under the influence of Gnosticism and Theosophy, reduced it to present day Hinduism, which is far removed from Christianity. Then there was a concerted effect to remove it far from any Christian tint. We will trace this development in this study.

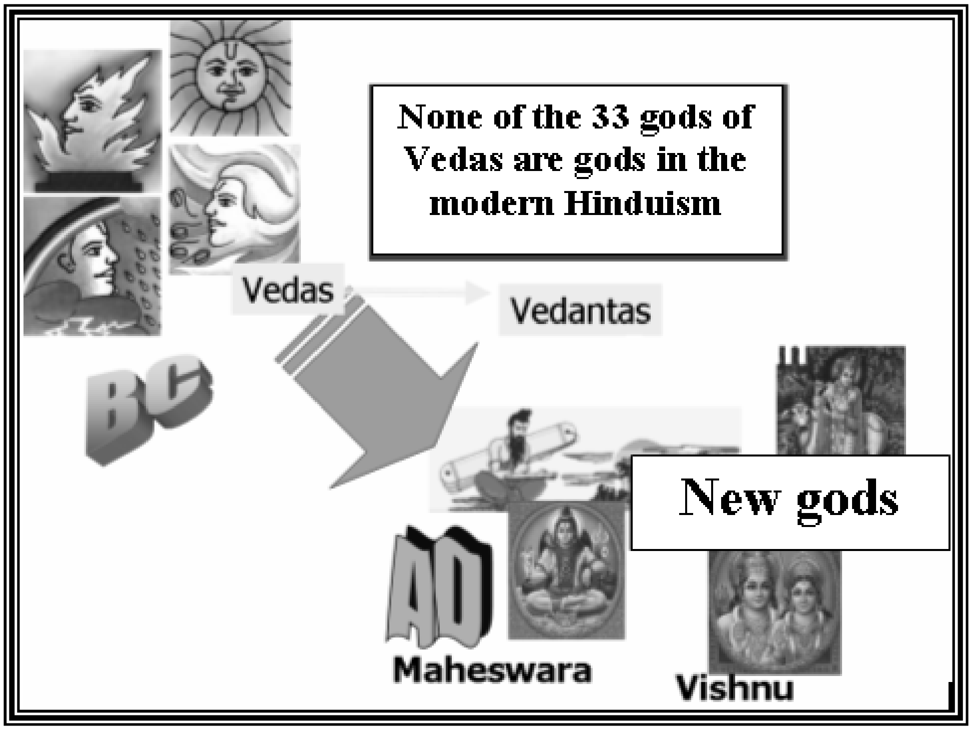
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THE THEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

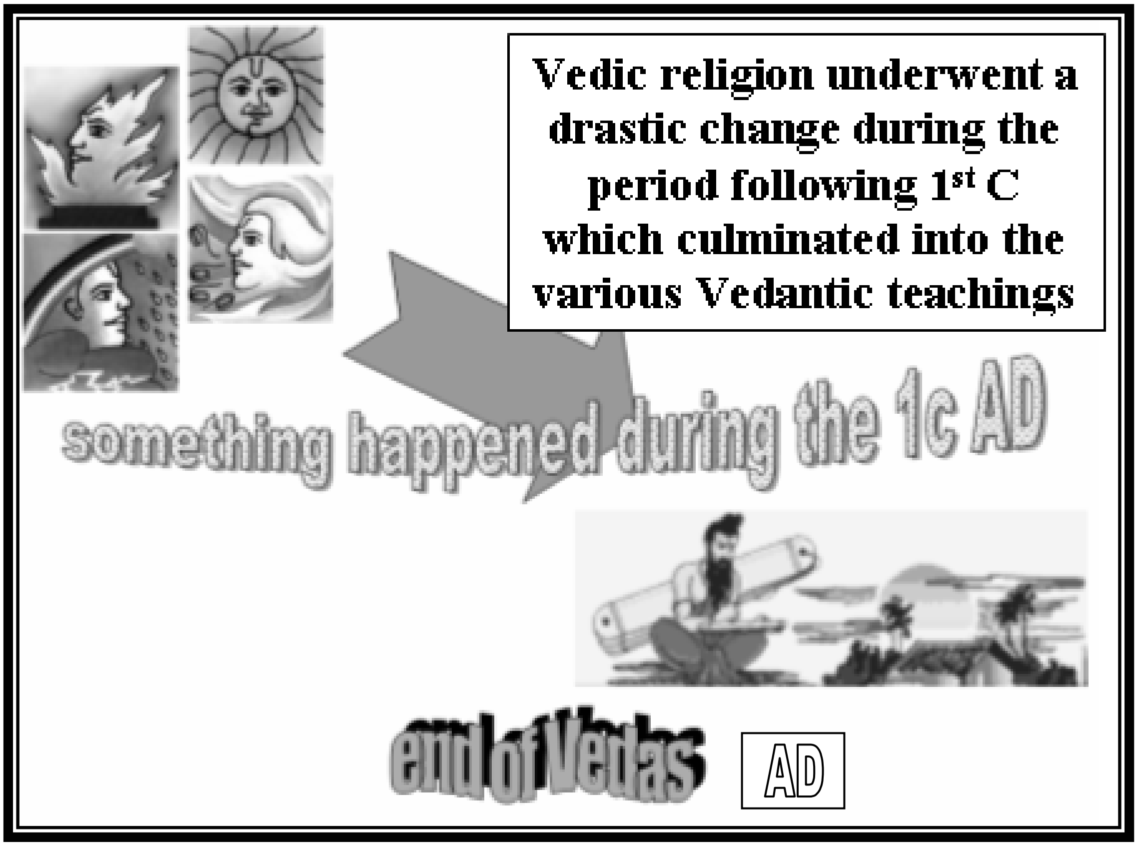
We have mentioned that there is a total discontinuity in the concept of God before and after the entry of Thomas. In this chapter we will look into these concepts in detail. The Vedic gods were personifications of Nature and their worship essentially sacrifices to these Natural Forces to appease them. All of a sudden by first century, we encounter Vedantas. Vedanta literally means "End of the Vedas," though it is today interpreted as "the essence of Vedas."

Vedantas, which appeared as theological discourses, presents a supreme Godhead, "Para Brahman'. Such an idea was not even remotely conceivable in the Vedic context.

New Gods like *Maheshwara* and *Vishnu* appeared. We have already discussed the concept of **Maheshwara**. Vish means Sky or Heavens. Vishnu simply means God of the Heavenlies or one who pervades everything. Then we have the concept of incarnation – God taking flesh in human form to save humanity. All these suddenly appeared after the entry of Thomas.


None of the 33 gods of Vedas are gods in the modern Hinduism
Vedas
Vedantas
BC
New gods
AD
Maheswara
Vishnu


Vedic
Aryan Gods
BC
Nature gods
Concept of God changed
AD
Para Brahman



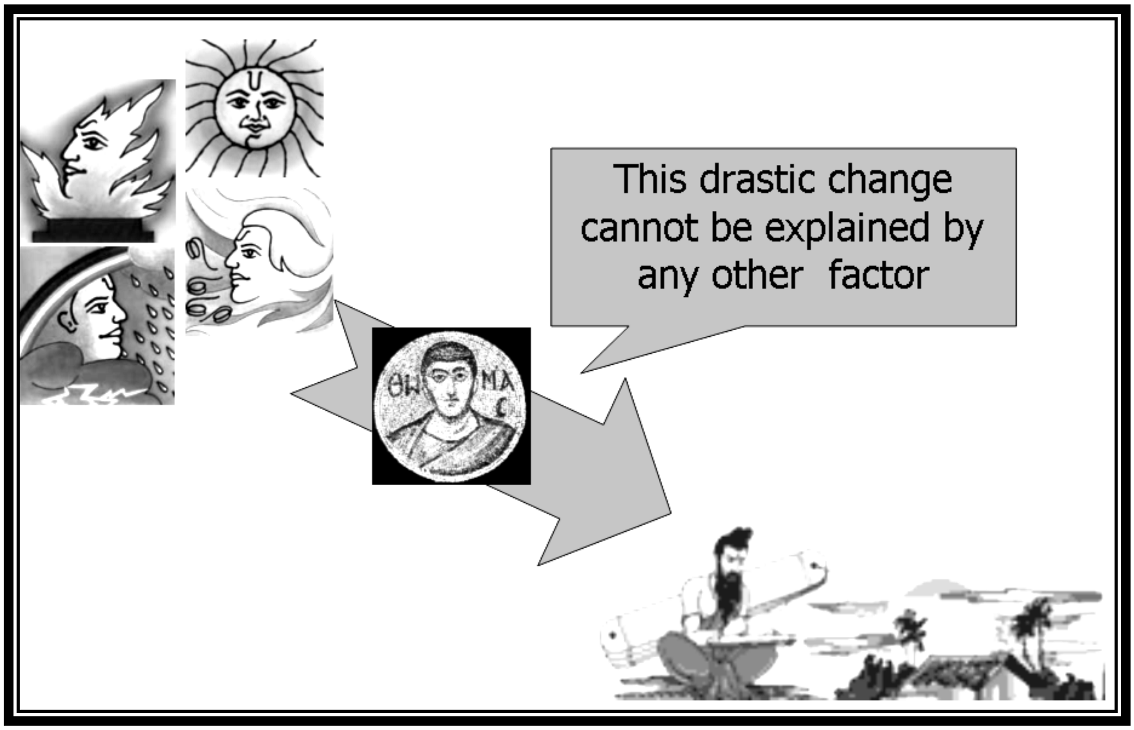
Here is what a history of India page from http://nabataea.net/sindia.html states:

The Deccan and South India [65 BC - 250 AD]

…….This was also the time when most of the Vedic gods passed into oblivion. Their place was taken by the trinity of gods, with Brahma as the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the destroyer. It is believed that when evil is rampant, various incarnations of Vishnu enter the world of men to save them. Krishna is one such 'avatar'. It is also said that Shiva evolved from the Tamil god of Fertility, Murugan.

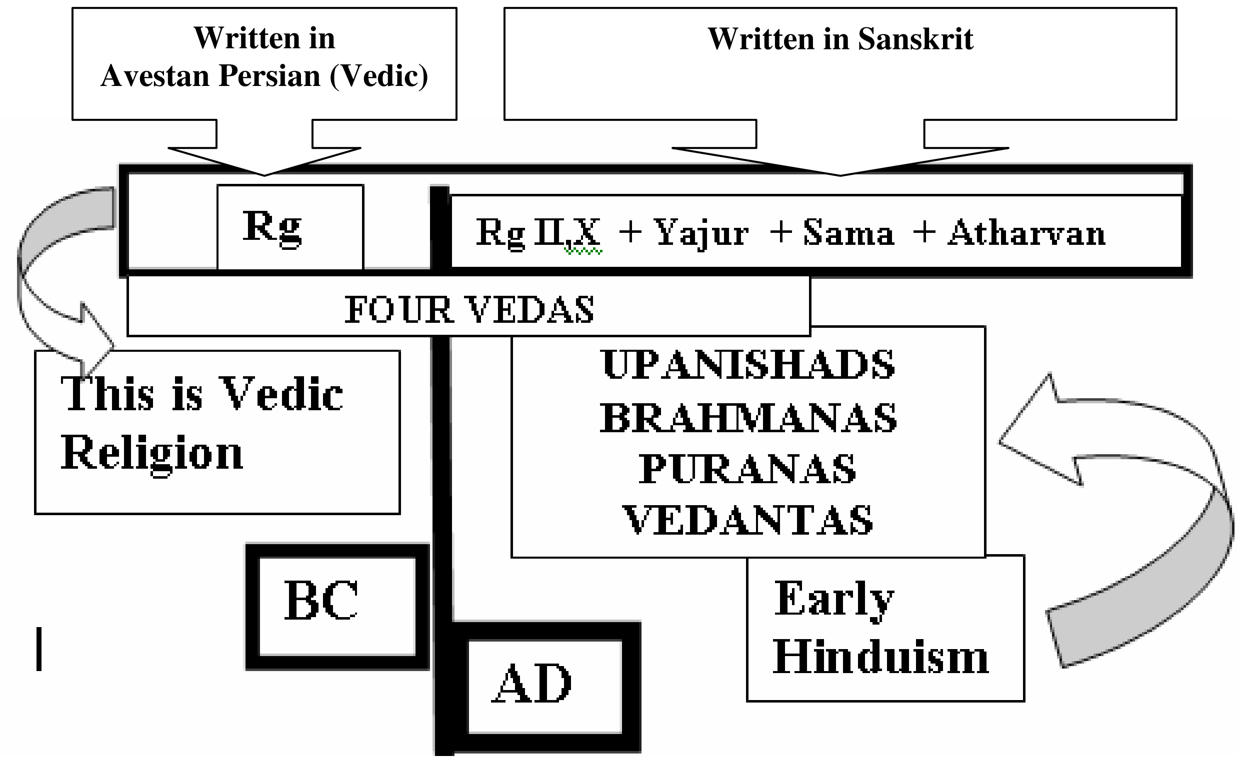
St. Thomas is said to have come to India to spread Christianity in the first century AD. It first spread among the people of the Malabar coast and in areas near present-day Madras.

++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++ Is there no connection?



There is no other historical event that is capable of explaining this drastic changes.

By the coming of Thomas, not only the content of the theology changed but also the language changed. Rig Veda (excluding chapters II and X) were written before the Christian Era in Vedic language. Vedic language is not Sanskrit. It is the same language in which the Zoroastrian Scripture Zend Avesta is written – a form of Persian language. All the other scriptures of India are written in Sanskrit. These include Rig Veda Chapter II and X and the Upanishads, Brahmanas, Puranas and the Vedantas. These were written during the Christian Era after the Thomas ministry.


Written in
Avestan Persian (Vedic)
Written in Sanskrit
Rg
Rg II,X + Yajur + Sama + Atharvan
FOUR VEDAS
This is Vedic Religion
UPANISHADS
BRAHMANAS
PURANAS
VEDANTAS
BC
AD
Early Hinduism

5

THE LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

Sanskrit

This brings us to the question of Sanskrit the sacred language of India. The word "Sanskrit" (Samskritam) means "that which have been refined" – a language refined from existing languages. That is what the name itself says and evidently it was developed out of common languages by refining them. The main language of North India during the ministry of Thomas was Pali and Prakrit - the languages used by Buddhism and Jainism. Dravidian language of Tamil already existed in the south. Evidently, Sanskrit language was made by refining all these common languages.

One of the early exhaustive collections of languages can be found in the Buddhist edicts of Emperor Asoka. (268 -233 BC). His aim was to declare the gospel of Buddha to all his subjects and therefore, he presented this gospel in all languages spoken in the empire. It included Greek and even Aramaic (because there was a small group of Jews in the country). However, there was no Sanskrit in the group, indicating that the language Sanskrit did not exist at that time. We know that Buddhism and Jainism used

only Pali and Prakrit languages. In fact, the earliest Sanskrit document ever found dates AD 150. It is evident therefore that Sanskrit came into existence during the period of AD 100 – 150 by refining the existing languages.

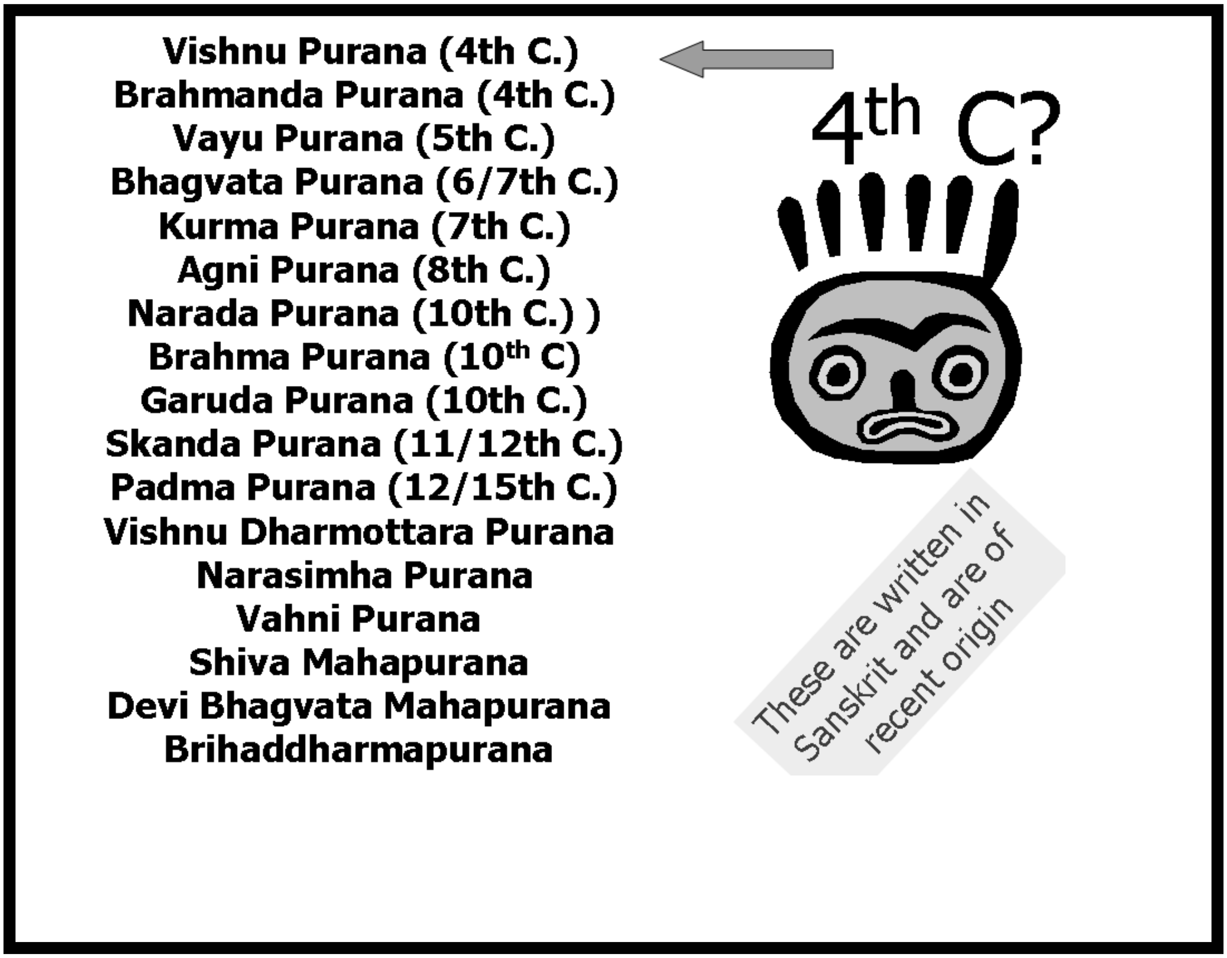
Sanskrit was developed out of Prakrit and other existing languages during the interval of 100 AD to 150 AD

The earliest
Classical Sanskrit
is found as an inscription dating around
A.D.150

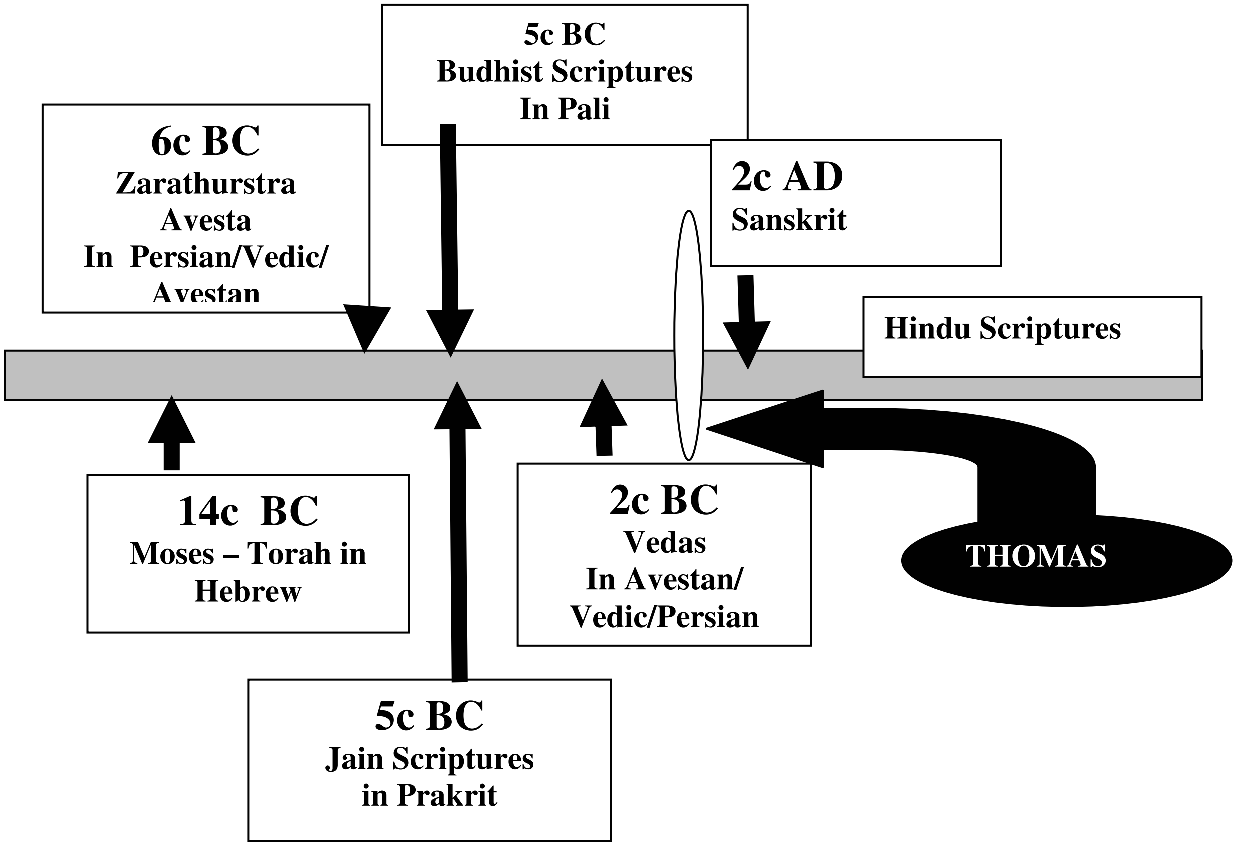


Sanskrit
probably was evolved as
the liturgical language of
the Thomas Christians
just as
Latin
evolved in the Greco-Roman World

Here is a list of dating of Hindu Puranas as assessed by objective Hindu Scholars:



It will be interesting to look at the time line of various scriptures. Please note that we are talking about written scriptures. Any one can claim a long period of non-written oral transmission of scriptures for which we have no method of verification. It is only common knowledge that it is the documentation and writing “in black and white", that lead to growth of ideas and literature. We cannot expect scientific thinking or logical thinking and building on ideas of the past without the solid communication medium of writing. Hence, the time line of Scriptures will be revealing.



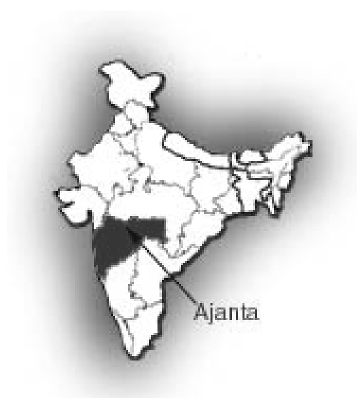
Notice that the earliest form of written scripture was the Hebrew Torah. Even Egyptian writing did not permit documentation to develop literature, because they were essentially pictograms. Only the phonetic system permitted elaborate conceptual literature. While Zoroastrian Zend Avesta was written in the Sixth Century BC and Buddhist and Jain literature by Fifth Century BC, Aryan Vedas came to be written down only in the Second Century BC. The rest of the Indian Scriptures – the Puranas and the Upanishads and Brahmanas came into existence only after Sanskrit became the language of Gods – the liturgical language and the language of theological studies. This took place after a century of Thomas' ministry. Written in Sanskrit, Puranas (Old Tales) are simply the stories of kings and their warfare, which tells about the Aryan conquest of India. The Upanishads were theological discourses, which gave different viewpoints. These theological schools of thoughts were crystallized much later than the second century AD.

6

ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCES

The objective scientific evidence comes from the study of archeology and iconography. A visitor to India is given to understand that the temples of India date back millenniums. A study of the dates of the temples will soon show otherwise.

There are a large number of Buddhist and Jain temples and Vihars (congregational areas) all over India. These are elaborately carved cave temples and abodes of monks. Here are the most popular astounding temples and their dates.



Ajantha Ellora Cave Temples of Maharashtra dates
200 BC – 500 AD Buddhist.





This Sanchi Buddhist Stupa was erected by Ashoka Maurya in the in the middle of the third century BC (Buddhist.)

Thus we see imposing Buddhist Structures in existence Before Christ (BC). But there is not a single Hindu Temple or Structure or Vigraha (idols) Before the Christian Era. Even the Jain Temples with idols date to the Christian Era.



The earliest “Hindu” Temple is found in Tigawa, near modern Jabalpur and is dated at the Gupta Dynasty in AD 350 – 650

The Earliest Hindu Temple dates only to 350 – 650 AD

The lack of any temples prior to AD 300 dedicated to any of the gods or avatars indicates that even though Indian culture dates back several millennium before Christ, the Hindu culture as envisioned today did not exist far beyond the third century AD. The great antiquity of Indian mythology and philosophies are simply a myth created very recently for political and social gains.

One of the earliest idols is found in the Elephanta Caves a few miles from the port of Bombay looking through the Gate Way of India. This representation is called in later documents as, Sada Siva Murthy, which means, “The Form of The Eternal God.”



Sada Siva Murthy

The three faces are called:
Tatpurusha-Mahadeva, (Self Existent Great God)
Vamadeva-Uma (feminine - right side), (The Right Hand Lady God) and
Aghora-Bhairava (Masculine Fierce - left side).
This is heavily reminiscent of Hebrew Kabala. These caves are dated at Satvahana period which ruled this area between secondd century BC and third century AD. The form of Sada Siva Murthy is dated in the third Centaury AD.
The earliest direct portrayal of Hinduism, “Ekamukha,” is also of fall later than third century.



Siva Linga Gupta

This Shiva Linga Gupta, is dated early fifth century AD and is found in Udayagiri, Madhya Pradesh, India

Kapaleeshwarar temple



Kapleeshwara Temple, Mylapore, Madras

This temple is located in Mylapore. Evidences of Christian heritage are found here. Even the Hindu scholars agree to the fact that there are a large number of

archeological artifacts intermixed with lowest level of the excavation, indicating the presence of Christian Temple in the Mylapore Kapaleswara Temple compound long before the presence of Hinduism. Since we know that Hinduism came after Christianity, it is not surprising. The Hindu fanatic writers has a hard time trying to explain it away "as a standing example of Christian desecration." The Tomb of St.Thomas itself is within the Temple compound. Surprising! Evidently Kapaleswara Temple was the "Head quarters of the Apostolic See of Thomas". "Kapal" means Skull and Eeswara means God. The very name Kapaleeswara is reminiscent of Calvary, the place of skull where Jesus was crucified.

The name Mylapore will be also found significant as the history of this area is discussed.

"Historians vouch that there is a strong reason to believe that the St. Thomas Church stands on the ruins of a Jain Neminathaswami temple and a Shiva temple, which had a Nataraja shrine attached.

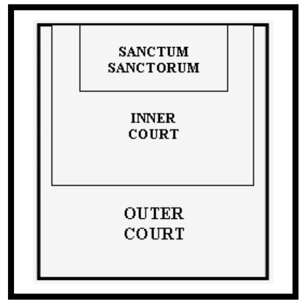
"Epigraphical data for the existence of the Jain temple on this site is said to be recorded in Jain Inscriptions in the State by A Ekambaranath and C K Sivaprakasham (Research Foundation for Jainology, Madras, 1987).

"More importantly, evidences have emerged, especially in the book 'The Saint Thomas Myth' in India by Ved Prakash, for the existence of the Shiva temple, which might have been the original Kapaleeswara Temple." (Hamsa.org)

The age of the present temple point to a period of about 300 years ago only. The Archeologists believe that the original temple had been in the Santhome area near the sea as recent archaeological excavations in that area point to the presence of a temple during the period as old as first century AD. Ancient maritime maps of the period show a "Temple of Augusti" (The Temple of the Great) in that area. Some scholars suggest

that it was a Roman Temple with Augustus Caesar as god. If that is so, we have no remnant of that temple anywhere.

Structures of Christian and Hindu Temples



The ancient Churches of South India found in Kerala retains its architectural similarity with Hindu Temples. When Vasco-da Gama came to Kerala, he even entered into a Kali temple thinking it was the Church of the Virgin Mary! The Jewish temple with three areas – outer court or court of the gentiles, the court (holies) for the assembly where worshippers come together and the sanctum sanctorum (holy of holies) - are reflected exactly in the Hindu temple structures.



The internal Tripartite structure of the temple is strikingly similar to the internal structure of the Hebrew Temple and also of Christian Churches of the East.

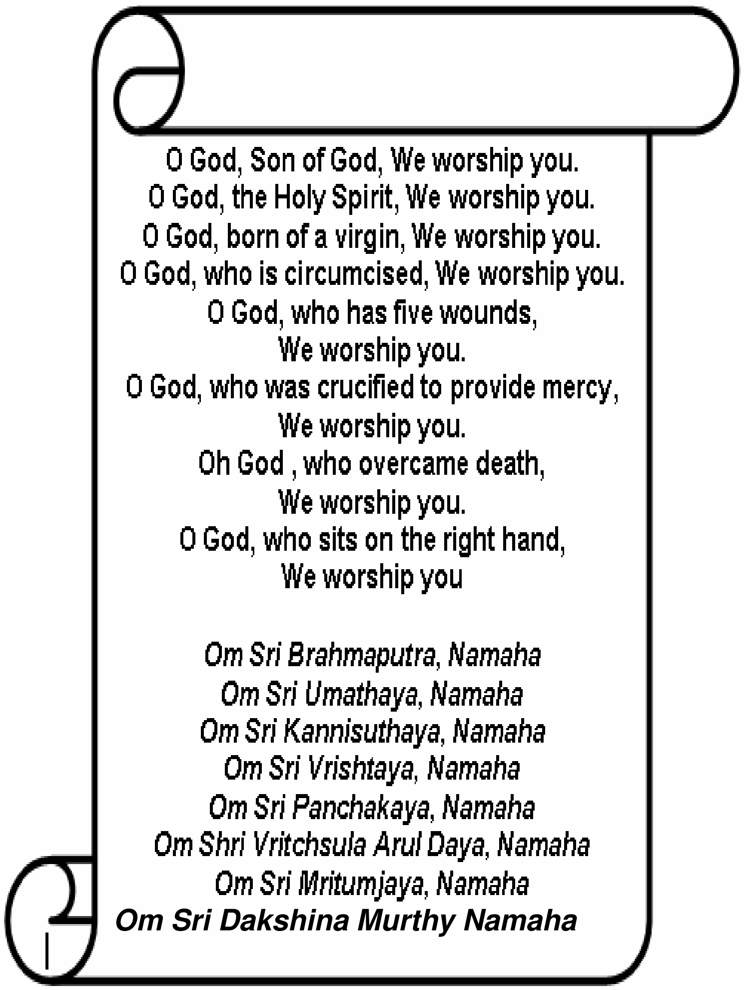
7

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCES

The claim that early Hindu Sanadhana Dharma was indeed Thomas Christianity and that it later degenerated through heretic influence to the current form of Hinduism may sound like an impossible claim. However deep within the Hindu Worship, Jesus is still hidden, even though it is not evident to every worshipper.

1. Naamaavaly – The liturgy of the Temple extolling the deity

Naamavaly – a series of names describing a deity is a common liturgical form in every Hindu worship. Here is a liturgical song, which is sung in almost all Dravidian temples even today. This was given by a Hindu practicing priest to me. The legitimacy of this has been confirmed through other sources. I am told that there are three more lines to it. Read this worship song carefully:



The interesting thing about this liturgy is that even though it is sung in every Tamil Temple, there is no deity who can be identified with this description. You cannot deny that only Jesus will fit the description. How did this Naamavaly extolling Jesus came to be a central part of Hindu liturgy? There is no doubt Jesus one of the deities in Hinduism

2. Purusha Prajapathy – The Person of the Lord of Hosts

Now let us take the Rig Vedic chapters II and X, which I have mentioned earlier, .were written in Sanskrit after 150 AD. In these chapters, the Veda presents the Person (Purusha) of Prajapathy. Prajapathi literally means The Lord of Hosts. (Praja = subjects, host Pathi = Lord.) However, the striking thing about Prajapathi is his characteristics. I will quote the texts that describe Prajapathi with striking resemblance to the person of Jesus.

"Hiranyagarbha: samavarthaagre
Bhuuthasya jaatha: pathireka aaseeth
Sadaadhaara Prudhwivim dyaamuthemam
Kasmai devaaya havisha vidhemam"
(Rig Veda X: 121:1)

This translates as follows:

In the beginning, God and his supreme spirit alone existed.
From the supreme Spirit of God proceeded Hiranya Garbha, alias Prajapathy, the first born of God in the form of light.
As soon as he was born, he became the savior of all the worlds.

"Thasmaad virraada jaayatha
viraajo adhi purusha:
Sajaatho athyarichyatha
Paschaad bhoomim adho pura:"
(Rig Veda X:90:5)

This translates as follows:

From that first being, the universe came into being. From that body of the universe came the omnipresent Person.
That Person thus became manifest, adopted various forms and character, and created the earth and other planets along with the creatures to live in them.

This is the same idea that Paul Preached.

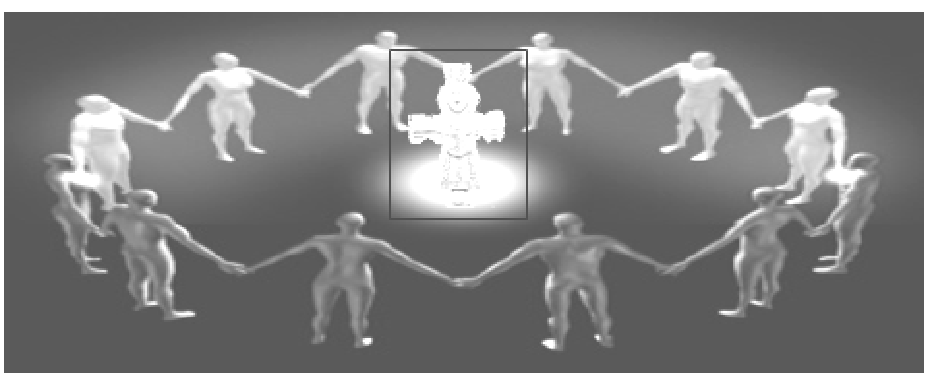
"He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him, all things hold together." Col 1:15-17

The Adi Purusha idea is very similar to the concept of the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament. Here he is definitely identified with Jesus.

"Purusha evedam sarvam
Yadbhutham yacha bhavyam
Uthaamruthathwasya esaana
Ya daannenathirohathi"
(Rig Veda X:90:2)

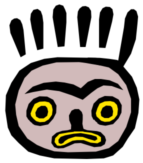
This man, the first-born of God is all that was, all that is, and all that will be.
And he comes to this world to give recompense to everybody as per his deeds.

Rev 22:12 "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done.



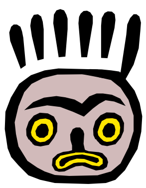
"Tham yajnam barhishi proukshan
Purusham jaathamagratha
Thena deva ayajantha
Sadhya rushayaschaye"

'Purushasookta'
(Rig Veda X:90:7)



This man, the first born of the God, was tied to a wooden sacrificial post and the gods and the Kings along the Seers performed the sacrifice.

"Thamevam Vidwanamruthaiha bhavathy
Nanya pandha ayanaya vidyathe"
(Rig Veda X:90:16. Repeated Yajur Veda XXXI:18)



This (sacrifice) is the only way for redemption and liberation of mankind. Those who meditate and attain this man, believe in heart and chant with the lips, get liberated in this world itself and there is no other way for salvation.

Rom 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
Here are some additional surprises.

In the beginning God was there and he was a spirit.
(Ithereya Upanishad:1/1/1)

Kathopanishad
" *Naiva vaacha na manasaa*
Praapthum shakyo na chakshusha
Astheethi bruvathonyyathra
Kadam thadupalabhyathe "

The Holy Spirit of the God cannot be reached with the eyes, mind, or words. Only those who believe that He exists and says so, will be reaching Him.
(Katham 6:12)

"*Sa eekshatheeme nu loka*
Lokaa Paalaanusruja ithi
Sodbhaaya eva purusham
Samudruthya moorchayaayt"

After the creation of the Firmament, Earth, and Waters, the Holy Spirit of the God thought like this: "I have created all the worlds. For them I should create a protector (Savior). With this intention, the Holy Spirit created a Person from His own self. (Ithareyopanishad 1. 1:3)

Yagnovy Bhuvanasya Nabhi.

Sacrifice is the important backbone of the world.

Sarvapapa Pariharo Rakthaprokshanamavasyam. Thadraktham Paramathmeva Punyadana Baliyagam

Sprinkling with blood is the means of cleansing for sins. This blood is given by God Himself through sacrifice.

Prajapathirdevebhyam Athmanam Yagnam Kruthva Prayaschittaha.

God offered Himself as the sacrifice for atonement for the sins of the world.

Prajapathiryagnaha.

God Himself was the sacrifice.

Yagnovaa Avathi Thasya Chaya Kriyathe.

Sacrifices being practiced are the shadow of the supreme sacrifice.

Nakarmana Manushtanairna Danasthapasavya Kaivalyam Labhathe Marthyah.

Cleansing of sins is not possible by baths, pilgrimages, giving alms or by following religious duties.

"I know the (one) supreme Purush ... Only in knowing Him does one pass over death. There is no other path leading to eternal life".
Svetasvataropanishad 3:8

Nanyah pantha vidyate-ayanaya

No other way is known for eternal life
Yajurved 31:18

3. Bhavishya Purana



Bhavishya Purana is the "Consequential Old Stories." ("Bahvishyam" mean consequence of; while Bhavi means future) It is the retelling of history as a consequence of human fall. The Prathisara Parva chapter of this book betrays its source as the Bible. The Stories are exact replication from the Old Testament with the names altered slightly to make them Indian. A sample of the portions to show this relation is given below:

" In the eastern side of Pradan (Pradan means Main, Important, Capital of the country) city where there is a big God-given forest (Eden), which is 16 square yojanas in size. The man named Adama (Adam) was staying there under a Papa-Vriksha or a sinful tree (Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil) and was eager to see his wife Havyavati. (Hovah) "

'Prathisargaparvam'4:28



"The Kali purusha quickly came there assuming the form of a serpent. "

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made.

"They lived by eating air with the leaves called udumbara "

It is strange that when copying the story from the book of Genesis, even the fact that the generations after Adam till Noah were vegetarians was acknowledged.

"After they had sons and all of them became mlecchas."

"Mlechas" literally mean sinners. All Adamic races became sinful

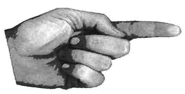
Adama's duration of life was nine hundred and thirty years

Genesis 5:5 And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

He offered oblations with fruits and went to heaven with his wife. His son was named Sveta-nama (Seth- nama = name), and he lived nine-hundred and twelve years.

Genesis 5:8 and all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.

"Sveta-nama's son was Anuta (Enosh), who ruled one-hundred years less than his father."



Thus with the small variation in name the story goes alongside of the Genesis Story thus:

Genesis 5:10 and Enosh lived after he begat Kenan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters:

Genesis 5:14 His son Kinasa (*Kenan*) ruled as much as his grandfather.

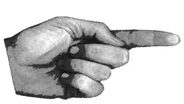
Genesis 5:17 His son Malahalla (*Mahalalel*) ruled eight-hundred ninety five years.

Genesis 5:20 His son Virada (*Jared*) ruled 960 years.

Enoch was taken up into the Heavens:

"His son Hamuka (Enoch) was devoted to Lord Vishnu, and offering oblations of fruits he achieved salvation. He ruled 365 years and went to heaven with the same body being engaged in mleccha-dharma."

Genesis 5:23 – 24 and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.



Notice that God of the Old Testament is translated as Vishnu – which literally means "God of the Heavens" a term used by the Persian Zoroastrian Kings like Cyrus to refer to the Hebrew God. Abraham, Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel used that to refer to God.

The Flood Story

Genesis 5:31 His son Lomaka (*Lamech*) ruled 777 years and went to heaven.

""His son Nyuha (Noah) ruled for 500 years.

He had three sons named Sima, Sama and Bhava. (And Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.) Nyuha was a devotee of Lord Vishnu.

Once the Lord appeared in his dream and said: "My dear Nyuha, please listen, there will be devastation on the seventh day. Therefore, you have to be very quick that you make a big boat and ride in it. O chief of the devotees, you will be celebrated as a great king".

Then he made a strong boat which was 300 feet long, 50 feet wide and 30 feet high. It was beautiful and all the living entities could take shelter in it. He then himself rode in it, engaged in meditating on Lord Vishnu."

Genesis 6:15 And this is how thou shalt make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

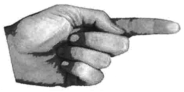
"Lord Indra called the devastating cloud named Sambartaka and poured heavy rain continuously for 40 days."

Genesis 7:12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

"The whole earth, Bharat-varsa, had merged in the water and four oceans came up together. Only Visala or Badarikasrama was not submerged. There were 80,000 great transcendentalists in Visala who joined with king Nyuha and his family. All of them were saved and everything else was destroyed."

Nephilims

"The whole earth, Bharat-varsa, had merged in the water and four oceans came up together. Only Visala or Badarikasrama was not submerged. There were 80,000 great transcendentalists in Visala who joined with king Nyuha and his family. All of them were saved and everything else was destroyed."

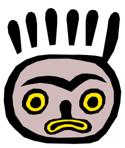


We can see that the story includes another group of people who were also saved. – the transcendalists of Visala. There is an indication of this in the Bible.

Genesis 6:4 The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also afterwards.

Nephilim: (Gen 6:4; Num 13:33, R.V.), giants, the Hebrew word left untranslated by the Revisers, the name of one of the Canaanite tribes. The Revisers have, however, translated the Hebrew gibborim, in Gen 6:4, "mighty men."

How long was the flood ?



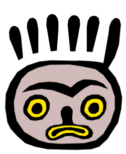
The total time of the flood of Noah works out to be exactly one year when we add all the various phases. Author of Bhavishya Purana knew it.What we notice here that the author of the Bahvishya Purana was not just a copier - but a scholar in Old Testament.

It is to be noted that the whole of Bhavishya Purana was written in Sanskrit and could not have been dated beyond 150 AD. Is it not strange that we have had intense students of the Old Testament writing at least part of the Bhavishya Purana?

The story then goes on to Moses and then on to Jesus himself as he appears in the Indian Continent.

“Then it was predicted that a master (Patriarch) will come by the name of Moosa (Moses) and his faith will spread all over the world.

When the era of Kali has reached three thousand years Jesus Christ appears with the name “Easa Maseeha” in the land of Huna. King Shaka asked “May I know, who you are!”. With apparent joy that male replied “Know that I am the Son of God. I am born in the womb of a virgin. ‘Easa Maseeha’ is my well known name”.



(Bhavashya purana- Prathisarga parva, IIIrd part- 2ndchapter- 23rd verse)

Two things stand out from this analysis

1. It is certain therefore that India was very well aware of the Semitic religions and also knew Jesus as the Son of God, born of a virgin and by the name Esa Massih.

2. They knew the Old Testament and the New Testament stories not as a casual reader does but as a scholar.

Indian Scholars knew the Old Testament well and has critically studied it !!

How did this happen, unless the Indian intelligentsia came across the Gospel long before the advent of the European Missionaries.

Thomas who was well founded in the Hebrew Traditions must have brought and introduced and taught them to the Indian Christian Community, which left these Puranas written in culturally relevant translation for the generations to come.

8

CONCEPTUAL EVIDENCES

Now we will take up basic symbolisms and concepts that are typically Christian as found in Hinduism and we will see that these evolved only after the advent of Christian Era. Even though we do not have any detailed description of the background of Thomas the disciple, we can be sure that he was not a Gnostic. The very fact he wanted to verify the truthfulness of resurrection by actually requiring to touch indicates that for him resurrection meant bodily resurrection. His response on the evidence again is striking. He bursts out with the first open declaration of the deitihood of Jesus. "My Lord and My God." When we come to think of the theology of Thomas, we should remember that he was a Jew and if what we see in India has any relation to the Theology of Thomas, he was deeply embedded in the Jewish mysticism commonly known as Kabala – the great oral traditions regarding the nature of God. In Hinduism today we can see the effect of this. He most probably extensively used symbols as a means of communication. At a time when written communications were not commonplace, the symbolic use of poetry, word and abstract objective symbolism were the only alternative. In our study of the symbolism and teaching of Hinduism we will see direct parallelism to Kabalistic and Jewish mysticism.

1. The Concept of AUM:

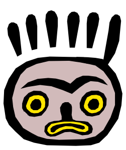


Tamil Om



Sanskrit Om

If you look at the Hindu symbolism today, the one that is associated uniquely is the sound of Om and the symbol of Om. You may not find this symbolism of AUM as common as the Devanagari Script AUM which came into existence much later in history.

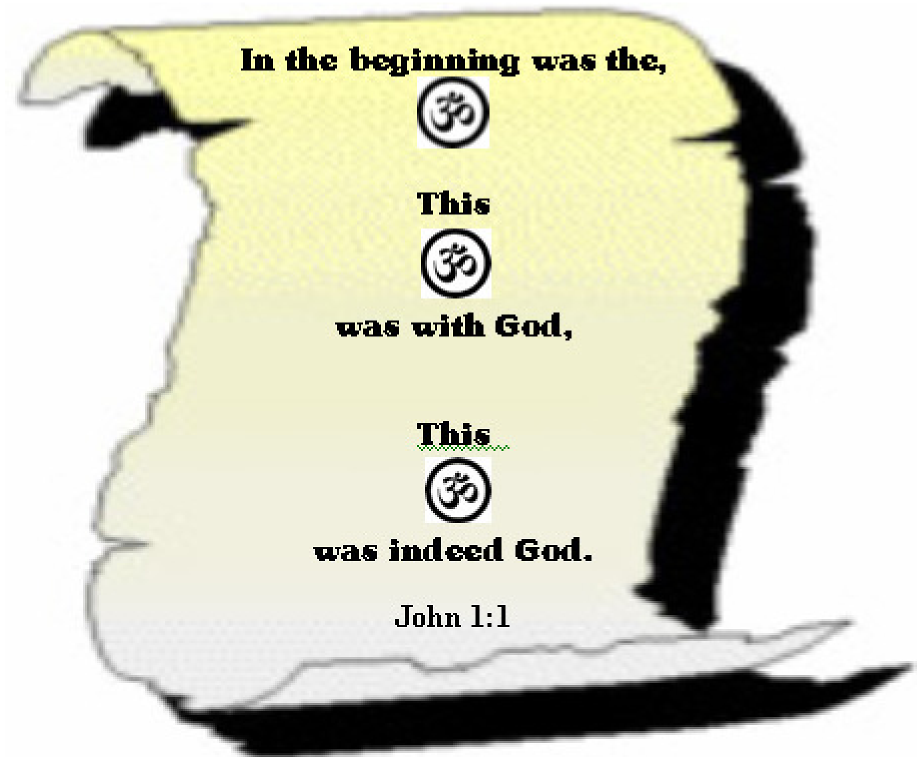


Yet the oldest AUM was in Tamil as given on the top left side.

But the surprising thing about it is that AUM is not found in any of the Vedas.

AUM
is not found in the ancient
Rig-Veda.
Or
in any of the Vedas

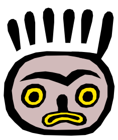
Even the early *Upanishads* written in *Sanskrit*, there are references to *udgîtha* ("up sound") and as *pranava* ("pronouncing"). This may be thought of as referring to the Sound Om. But it is a stretching the imagination. The first direct reference to AUM is found in *Prashna-Upanishad,* where the threefold constituents of *AU*M is mentioned and explained. It is also found in *Mândûkya-Upanishad. Brihad-Âranyaka, Chândogya, and Taittirîya, Aum is mentioned many times both as Aum and as Om-kâr. In the Yoga-Sûtra (1.27), it is called the Word (vâcaka) of God (îshvara).*



The concept of AUM is identical with the Greco-Roman concept of Logos.

The official explanation in the Upanishad for AUM is that it consists of three sounds representing the three persons within the Godhead, but forming one united sound that creates It also introduces the fullness or the substance of God as represented by the silence that follows or the totality of the syllable. The Word was the first expression of God through which the whole cosmos – living and the nonliving – visible and the invisible – were created. If one looks even deeper, the whole of Kabala and the threefold tree reaching into the unknown darkness encased in the ineffable name of YHVH can be seen in the Upanishadic teachings. It goes far deeper than the simple logos of the Greek. The later Hindu trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara of today) with its intricate mythologies are based on the dialectics

of good and evil and their interaction, (a feature borrowed from the Gnosticism after the coming of Manicaen the Persian Gnostic. Mani is an important person in the Indian religious scenario and we will have occasion deal with this person's history and mission later in the book) This was the basic conflict on which Manicheans were declared heretics by the early churches everywhere in the world. The AUM on the other hand represents the Trinity based on Love and not on conflict.



The symbol and mantra AUM emerged in Indian scene soon after the mission of St.Thomas the Apostle and were seen only after that time. All early churches in Kerala had used this as the Christian symbol and they appear at the entrance of the seven original churches established by Thomas.



You can see them even today over the main entrance of many of the churches.

AUM was clearly part of the Malankara (Malabar – Kerala) Christian tradition from the first century. They however associate it with the Christian Trinity and to Christ – the word who became flesh. An objective conclusion would be that Aum was indeed the original Christian concept as introduced by Thomas.

2. The Concept of God: Jagnath: Lord of the Universe

This figure of Jagnath, which is celebrated as the Lord of the Universe, is really an epitome of the theology, which is essentially the theology of Eastern Churches and that of the Hebrew Kabala. It developed in India soon after the advent of Thomas. The description of the figure can be summarized as follows:



Jadnath

The Jagnath symbol is an excellent representation of the Eastern Theology

In the beginning, God alone existed. We cannot attribute any quality to God, because qualities are relative. Without the existence of another, we cannot define qualities. This God – the beginning - is referred to as Nirguna Brahman (God without Qualities). This is represented as the darkness. God who resides in darkness symbolized the God who cannot be known. "Jehovah hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness" (1 King 8:12) "Jehovah spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice" (Deu. 5:22)

Then the fact remains that we have a creation and movement. Therefore, this Nirguna Brahman put on a variation within himself. It is as though he differentiated himself to



parts thus creating a God with Properties and Qualities. This God is known as Saguna Brahman (God with Properties). God is a person not a force. This is because creation needs a purposeful act. The two open eyes represent this waking up process. This God has expressed himself and hence can be known through creation and in intimacy.

Out of the mouth of this Jagnath proceeds the AUM – the Word.

The Aum is a person as its vibrations takes the form of a man - a person and rises to create. It is this person Om that created the universe with all its variations – material and immaterial. The whole creation is in a way Word becoming flesh. The whole cosmos forms the body of God. “For in him we live, and move, and have our being”. This concept explains the immanence and transcendence of God. Church as the body of Christ is just an extension of this Jagnath concept.



It is evident that this sophisticated concept of God which did not exist prior to Christian era appeared in crystallized form in powerful concrete expression could not have occurred except through Thomas. This connection of Hebrew mysticism to Indian theology goes much deeper in all aspects of Hindu worship and daily living.



3. Lingam: The Form of the Formless – Rup-arupa

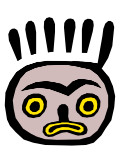


The basic symbol of Saivism is the Siva Lingam. Though during the intense mud slinging and persecution between Saivite and Vaishnavites in the medieval period, Siva lingam was given derogatory interpretations; its actual implications are still held by the Saivites.

Lingam means form. How can a formless god be represented? Since God does not have a form we cannot represent Him with a form other than formlessness. Siva Lingam is just that. A form without a form. Siva lingam is the ruparupa aspect because it is not any manifested form of Siva, nor is it formless, because the lingam is a concrete piece of stone, which is an emblem of God. Thus, it is intermediate between the formless Absolute, Parasiva, which is beyond the sensory perception of man and manifest forms of Siva and the incarnate God.

The Lingam is the representation of the Form of the Formless God. The Word became Flesh

Notice again the usual three lines representing the Trinity with the middle line marked



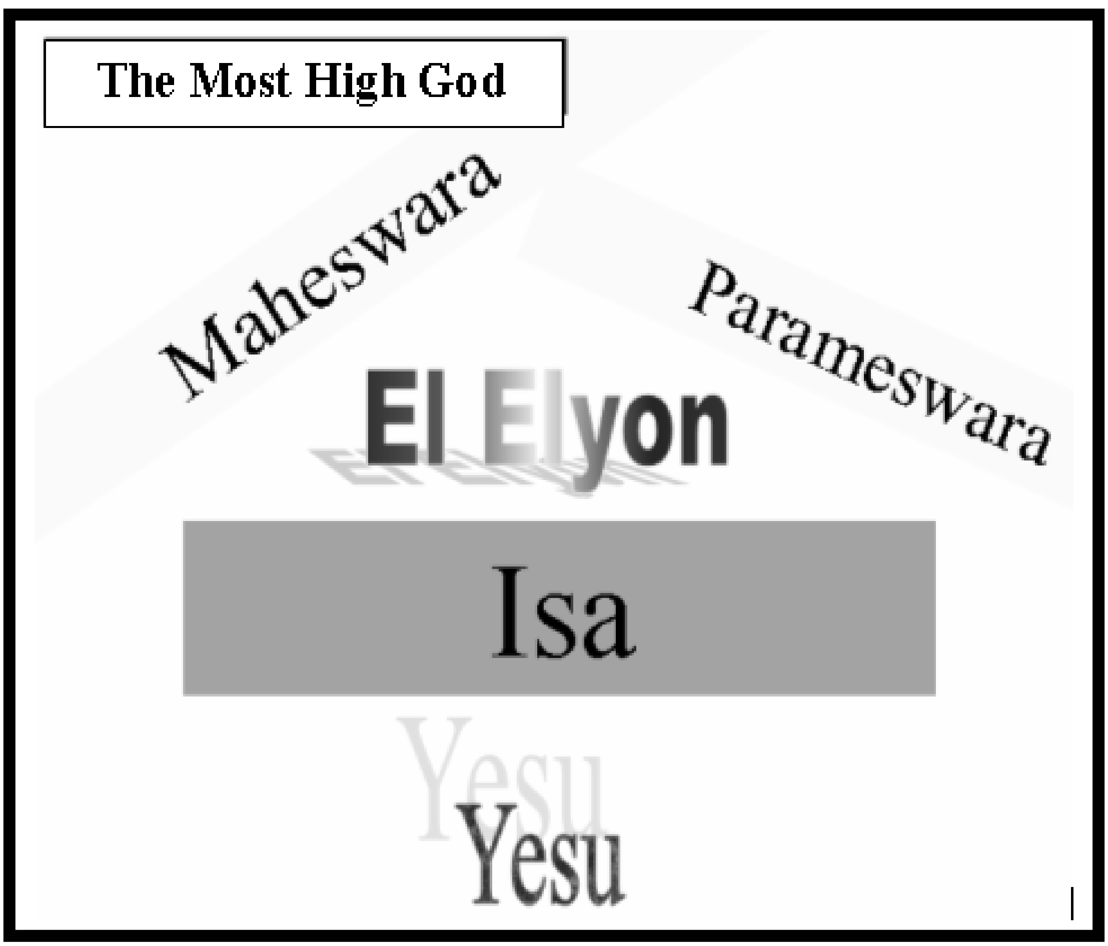
d spot. Father, Son and the Holy Spirit with the Son with as the sacrifice

e creation of the world.

4. Parameshwara - Shiva

The concept of Parameshwara originally comes from the concept of El Elyon which is translated as The Most High God as in Gen **14:18** where Melchiz'edek king of Salem was called the priest of God Most High, maker of heaven and earth. He blessed Abraham in the name of the God Most High and then onwards Abraham himself swore in that name in Gen 14:22.

Parameswara is the literal translation of El Elyon. The Most High God of Melchizedek



It is therefore reasonable to assume that the Dravidians who can at least partially claim to be the children of Abraham through Keturah received the teachings of Thomas and assimilated it easily. Thus the roots of the Saivism are deeply rooted in the Thomas traditions.

5. The Name of God: Ishwara, Shiva as Jesus

The Hebrew name of the person whom we refer as Jesus was

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ ***Yehoshua***

which is rendered in English as Joshua . A shortened form of the name is

יֵשׁוּעַ ***Yeshua***

from which we get the Dravidian translation through St. Thomas as

Yesu, Easow, Isa, Iswara

The name given in Greco-Roman culture is derived from their context as follows:

When the good news of the gospel was translated into to the Greco- Roman culture by Paul and his group it was rendered in Greek as

Ἰησοῦς

Iesous

Pronounced as Yesous.

Y in some languages is pronounced as J (ya as ja)

rendering it as

JESUS



Fish was the early Christian symbol. Jesus said, “I shall make you fishers of men”

The Greek word for fish is ichthus, spelled: Iota Chi Theta Upsilon Sigma.

ΙΧΘΥϹ

This is used as an acronym for

Iesous (Jesus) **CH**ristos (Christ) **TH**eou (God) **U**iou (Son) **S**oter (Savior).

Jesus Christ, God, Son, Savior.

We will see that similar acronyms and symbolism are found in Saivism. While we have no hesitation to accept the name Jesus, even though it is only a Greco-Roman version of the real name, we should have no problem in seeing the name Maheswara or Shiva as equivalent to Jesus.

Isa and Iswara are derived from the Hebrew name of Jesus Yeshua.

6. Pillayar Concept - The Son of God

The concept of Father, Son and the Holy Spirit translates into Tamil as Appan (Father), Makan (Son); Amma (Mother) also called Sakthi (Energy, Power). This is depicted in the family of Maheswara. The strange thing about this picture is that Makan – the Son – is represented with a face of an elephant. Ganapathy which means Lord of Hosts has the face of an elephant. Ganapathy is the most important deity in the life of every

Hindu. This is because no one can enter the presence of Shiva unless it is through the Son. He is the reconciler, who removes the obstacles to enter the divine presence. Hence Ganesha or Ganapathi (Lord of Host) or is also known as Vinayakar (One who destroys sin), and Vigneswara (One who removes obstacles). Hence all worship starts with the worship of Ganesha. Ganesha Chathurthi (Festival of God of Hosts) is the biggest festival all over India.

The elephant faced Ganapathy (The Lord of Host), the son of Siva came out of the symbolism of Word becoming Flesh – the Incarnation.





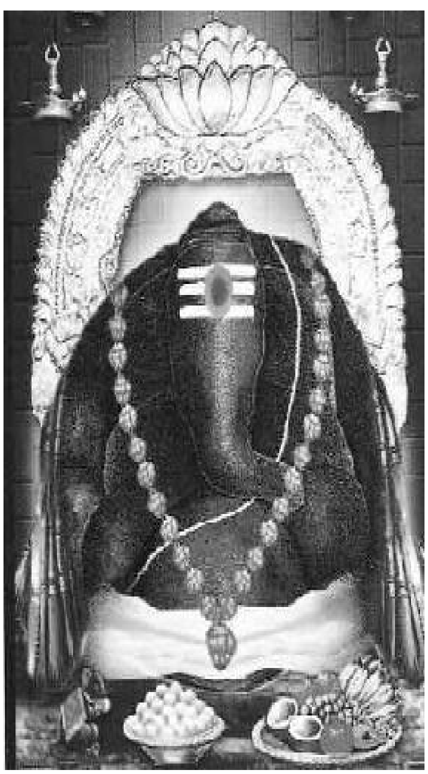
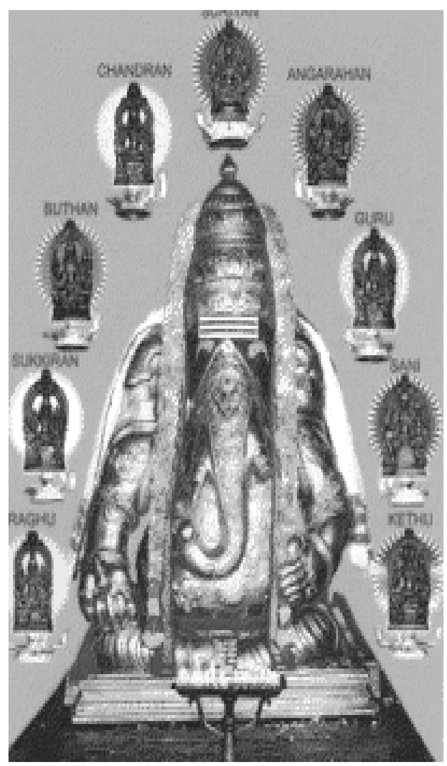


Kumara Kadavulai

Son God

How the Elephant faced God came to be.

In Karaikkudi lingam, two hands were also added to show that the formless took the form of a man. In Valampuri and Karpaka idols an Om was placed over the Lingam which culminated in the elephant head. This explanation fits well with the picture because Ganapathi has only one tusk corresponding to one tusk in Om

7. Vishnu – The Lord of the Heavens.

Having discussed Saivism, we will take up Vaishnavism, where the Godhead is considered from a different aspect, as Vishnu. Vish means Heavens and Vishnu is the God of the Heavens. It can also be interpreted as Omnipresent or All-Pervading. This denomination takes its parallel to Calvinism, where God is considered the Glorious one who controls everything. The Vehicle of Yhvh is Cherub, and the corresponding vehicle of Vishnu is the Garuda.

The LORD of Hosts is enthroned on the cherubim. One of the four faces of the Cherubim was Eagle. Just as the Cherubim theme was woven in the temple art and furniture and is considered one of the guardians of the gates of Eden, Garuda is a recurring theme in the temples of South India, both within the sanctuary as well as at the gates.



Vishnu means Lord of the Heaven, The Omnipresent.

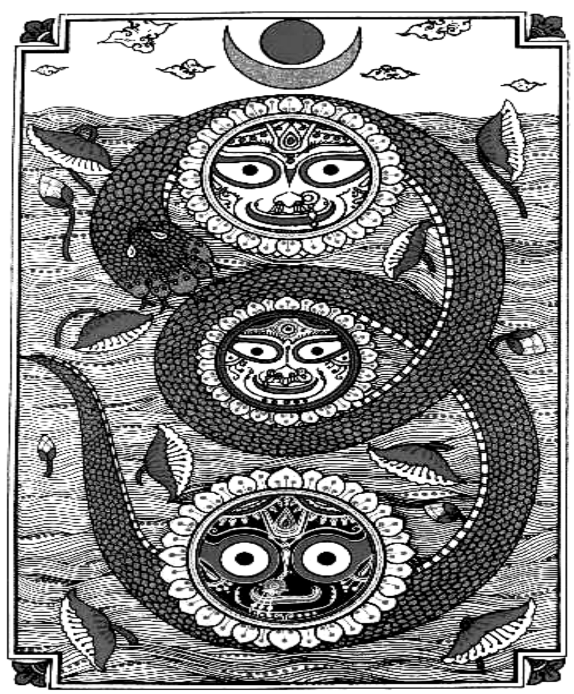
Vishnu is seated on the Cherubims

It is interesting to note that the Vehicle of Siva is the Ox – another face of the four faces of the Cherubim.

Thus it is not difficult to note that various Hindu sects were the offshoots of Thomas Christianity and the present forms are the results of external influences. We will deal with two of those heretic factors later which transformed the Thomites into Hindus.

Today Vishnu is identified with Krishna. Early Hinduism did not know of Krishna and the name Krishna is not found before 300 AD in any documents or archeology. Some attempts are made to equate Krishna with Christ. "Christ and Krishna - the Name is the Same " was a series by the Iskon (Hare Krishna) guru Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada It is evident that Krishna was a local King who wanted to be god. This King evidently was a promiscuous adulterer. Iskon justifies this as follows: "Of all of Krishna's pastimes, the Rasa Lila dance is the one that draws the most controversy. Many mundane moralists accuse Krishna of adultery - dancing with other men's wives late at night in the forest. Such people do not understand that Krishna is not a human being. Therefore, He is not obligated to abide by human morality"!! (Premananda Das, 2001)

8. The Concept of Trinity.



The Early Trinity

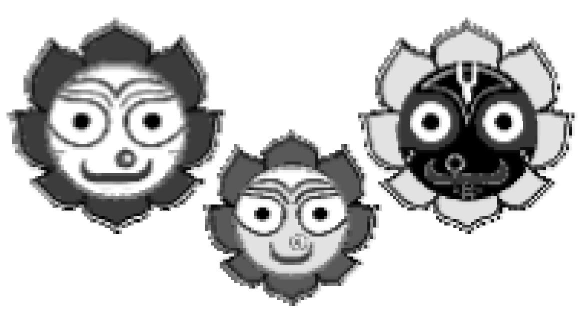
The Early Thomas Christian trinity in contrast to the later competing trinity can be seen represented in the above figure of "The Early Trinity" in Hinduism. The serpent Anantha Naga represents the timelessness. Anantha means without end. The coiled serpent represents the infinities. Once movement and change occur, time comes into

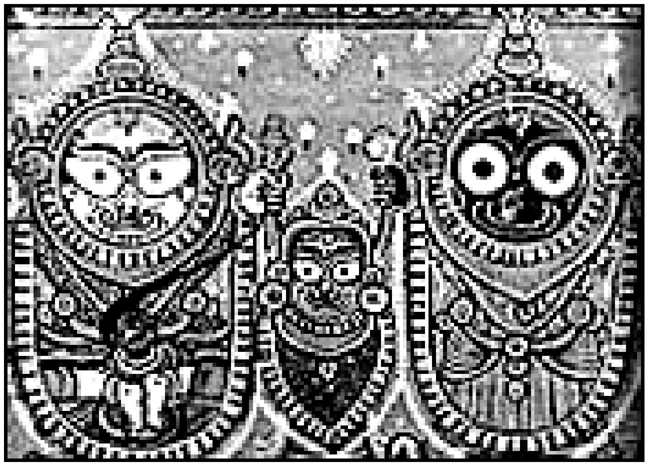
existence because time is simply a measure of change. It started as in Gen 1: "I n the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said"

When the unknowable God came to be knowable, they appeared as Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

What is interesting is the representation of Trinity. The bottom base is the dark face – a God who cannot be seen - Father. On the top the white face – a God who can be seen – Son – the incarnate God. And the female figure commonly called in Hinduism as Sakthi – the Power – the Life giving spirit. Energy is represented as Red. In order to show the aspect of life giving, the Holy Spirit is represented as a female. In Aramaic, in the language Jesus spoke, the Holy Spirit was indeed Feminine Gender. It is a true Hebrew concept. Thus in the book of Proverbs, we have wisdom - represented as a female - who cooperated in the creation with God from the beginning. The second birth also comes from the Mother Spirit as we had the first birth from our Earthly Mother.

More iconographic representations of this Trinity (in contrast to later Hindu Trinity) can be found all over India.





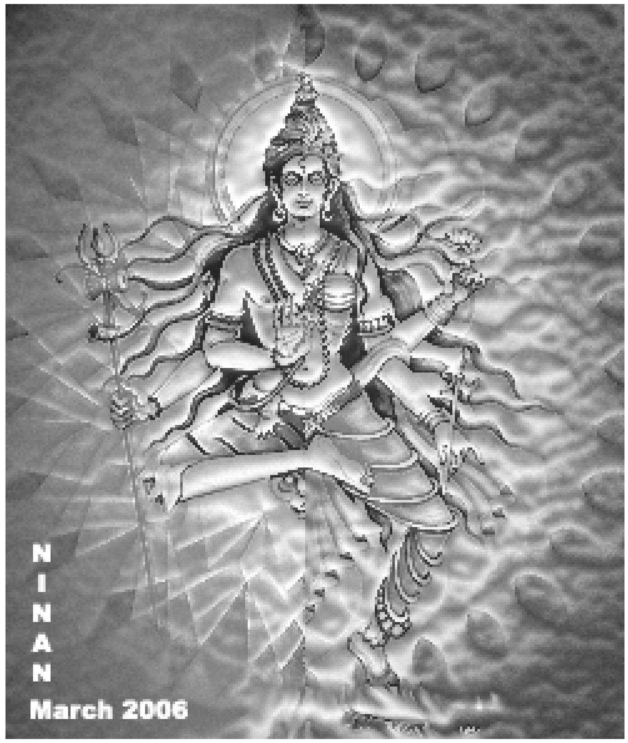
These are the same representation with the white face – visible incarnate God as the remover of sin as represented by the human figure

9. Siva Sakthi - Ardha Nareeswara – God half male and half female

In some cases the Father (Siva) and Holy Spirit (Sakthi) are considered united together. . This concept is depicted in the united half man half woman icons as given below.

God of creation is both Male and Female. " in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Sakthi actually means Power, a direct reference to the Power that is the Holy Spirit. This representation in Saivism is known as the Ardha Nareeswara. (Ardha = half; Naree = Woman ; Iswara = God. Thus Ardha Nareeshwara would mean God who is half woman) You can not differentiate God, they are one in substance. There is no Siva without Sakthi. Even the ideal of human marriage is based on this oneness of Godhead, that they may be one



Ardha Nareeswara – God who is half male and half female

10. Mummoorthy – Vaishnavite Trinity

We should expect that such female representations brought with it objections in male dominated society. This probably was the cause of development of Vaishnavism, where all three in the trinity are male . The modern Hindu Trinity is Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. While Siva is till the father figure and Brahma the creator the emanated son figure, Vishnu the Energy and Power is now a male. Incidently Vishnu often played the female to achieve things in the Purana stories. We should expect this to be a much later development. The Thomas tradition was Hebrew Kabalistic tradition, where Wisdom and Power was female.



Hindu Trinity: Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara.-
called mummoorthy (the form of Three)

The creator is given here with four heads. These developments must have come under Gnostic influence, where creation of cosmos was done by a fallen god. – Brahma. Brahma is seldom worshipped in any of the temples even though He is one of the Trinity in the Vaishnavite tradition..

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FIVE BASIC DOCTRINAL ASPECTS OF SAIVISM AND VAISHNAVISM

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As St.Thomas brought in the gospel of Maheswara (Parameswara) into the Indian culture, it took forms that are native in its interpretations with native symbolisms as its expression. The Indian Catholic Way simply translated would be "Hindu Sanadhana Dharma". The name used by the modern Hinduism. It displaced Vedism, Buddhism, Jainism and almost all local religions of India at that time from the Northern India to the Southern Most India even unto Sri Lanka.

In time various denominations began to evolve with emphasis on specific aspects of god and gospel. Two such denominations were Vaishnavism and Saivism. Saivism emphasized the love of god and the Sacrifice of God for the redemption of Mankind, while Vaishnavism emphasized the glorious almighty God of the Skies. In Kerala Christians were called Nasranees (One who follow the Nazarene) and Isanees (or Isanuvadikal – one who are followers of Isa)

Saivism is considered by many to have been born in Tamilnadu, the southern most part of India where the Dravidians are concentrated. So even today Tamilnadu continues to be the home of Saivism. It became a distinct religion and took the name Saivism only during the period between 3rd century A.D. to 10th century A.D.

Saivism

Siva is considered to be the supreme God.

He is worshipped in two forms. One as a lingam and the other as human form. The human form has several varieities. The most important of them are Nataraja - the dancing posture and Dakshinamoorthy - the teacher instructing the four sages on the absolute truth.

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It is interesting to note that in Hinduism, the only God who took the poison so that the creation may be saved is Shiva.

The purana story of churning the milky Way:

The gods (*suras*) and demons (*Asuras*) churned the milky way with the mountain *Mandra* as the churning rod and the snake *Vasuki* as the churning rope to obtain the elixir of immortality (*Amrit*). During churning, many things emerged. But as the churning continued for the *Amrit* or Nectar and just before the elixir came out, poison flowed out of it. The whole creation was in danger of being destroyed by the poison. To protect the creation, Lord Siva received the flowing lava of poison and drank it all so that none of the creation will be dead in an act of self-sacrifice. Seeing this act of Siva, his consort pressed his throat, not allowing the poison to go down. Thus the poison got held in the neck and became blue. Siva is also called Blue Necked – Neela kanda

Vaishanvism on the other hand was concentrated in the Northern India. It was dominated by the Aryans and emerged by the third century AD as an independent religion opposing the Savites

Vaishnavism

Vaishnavas believe that God is ultimately personal and that the ultimate goal is to return to our eternal position as a servant to the Supreme Lord. The way back is Faith (Bhakthi) and absolute surrender to God.

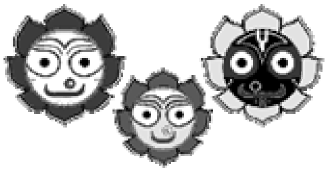
Modern Vaishnavites believe that Vishnu – which is today identified as Krishna – takes incarnations every eon.

Thus Thomas transformed the religious scenario of India and all of India practically was Christianized. Majority of the population were Christians alongside the other religions of Buddhism, Jainism and Vedism. Vedism was most affected as most followers of Vedism became Christians. But they were not called Christians. The name "Christians" is a term that was created in Antioch after the Greek word "Christos".
Act 11:26 For a whole year they met with the church, and taught a large company of people; and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians.

Five Basic Doctines of Christianity

<u>The five Christian Doctrines</u>
Doctrine of Trinity
Doctrine of Incarnation
Doctrine of Fulfillment of Sacrifice
Doctrine of Forgiveness of Sin
Doctrine of Salvation through Faith.

Five Basic Doctines of both Saivism and Vaishnavism



Doctrine of Trinity



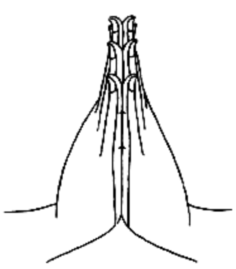
Doctrine of Incarnation (Avtar)



Doctrine of Fulfillment of Sacrifice

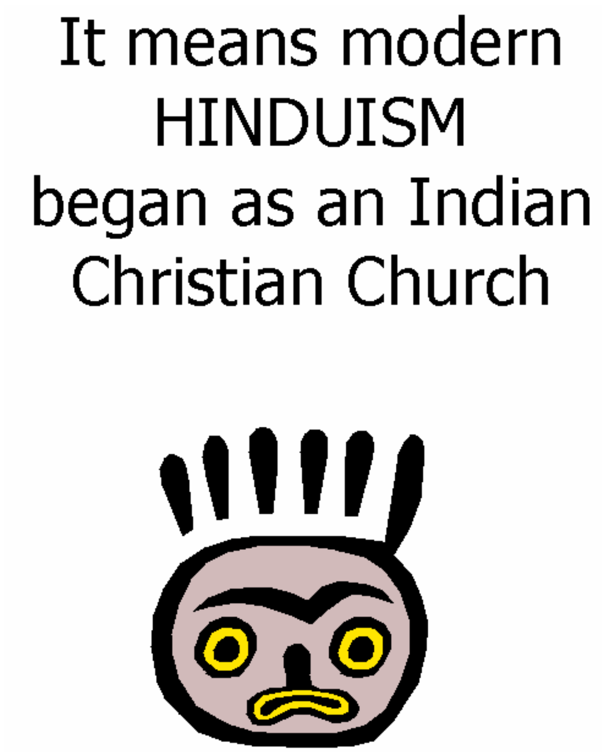


Doctrine of Forgiveness of Sin

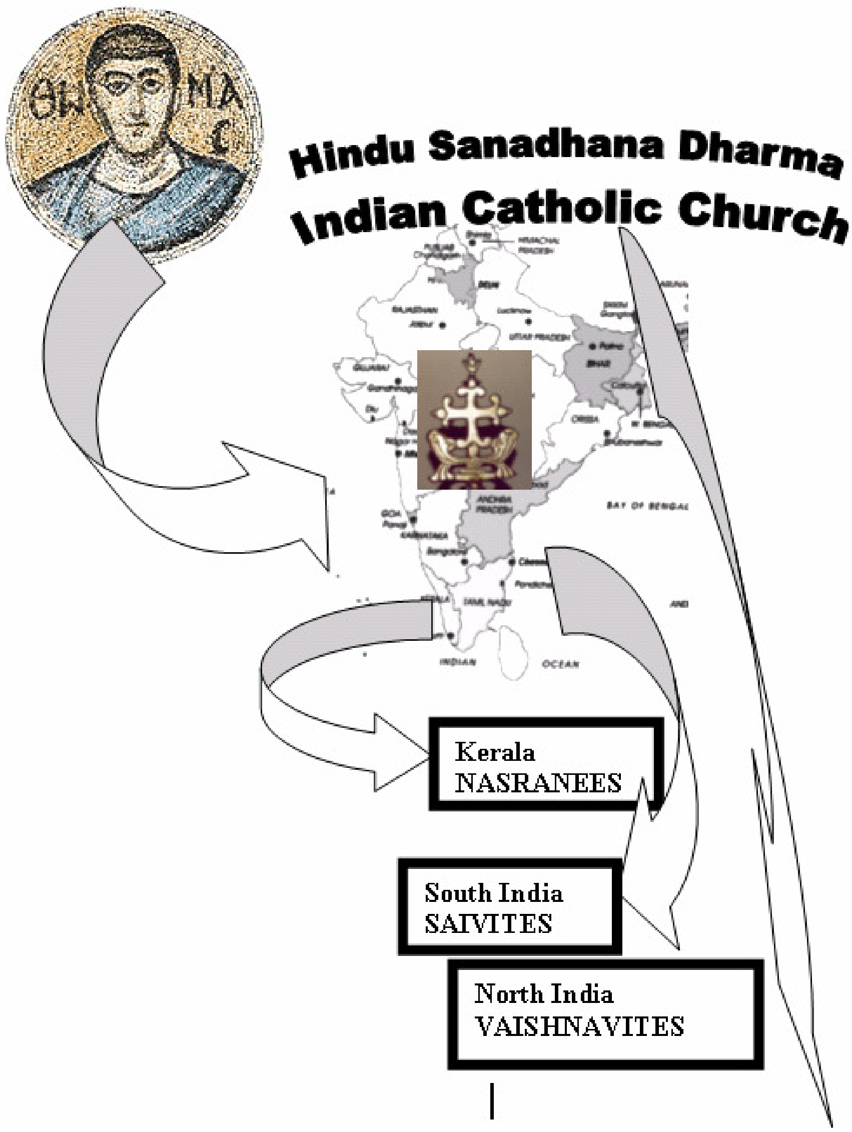


Doctrine of Salvation through Faith (Bhakthi Marga)

All these five doctrines which are common to both Saivite and Vaishanavites were never known in pre-Christian era and are definite indications of the form of Early Christianity in India. Hindu Sanadhana Dharma of first century AD was indeed the form of Christianity that St.Thomas established and central doctrines were indeed Christian.



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These denominations evolved out of specific emphasis on aspects of God. They all started as Christian Churches but became heretic through syncretization and Gnostic influence from Babylon. We will now look into the forces that transformed Indian Catholic Church to modern Hinduism as it is today.

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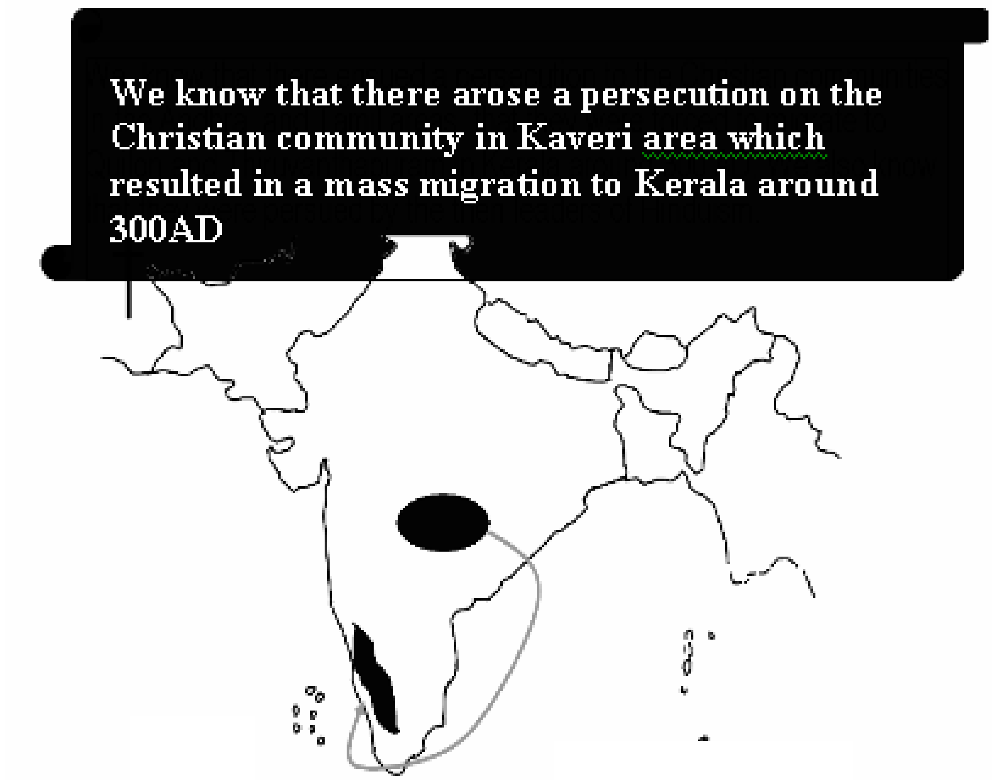
GNOSTIC INVASION

Even though we see the vestiges of early Christianity in Hinduism, the current Hinduism is far from Christianity. The Way evolved in a direction that is totally distinct from its counter parts in the rest of the world. We need to find out the cause and forces that led to this.

The palm leaf documents of Kerala tradition indicates a mass persecution of Christians that occurred in all of inner India resulting in a mass exodus of Christians into Kerala – Malabar Coast in the Southern most tip of the Indian continent, where they obtained asylum.

The palm leaves quotes as follows in one place: then in AD 293 "72 families of Christians of Vellala origin from Kavery Poopatanam of Puhur District on the River

Kaveri arrived in Kollam (Quilon) in Kerala as refugees fleeing from the persecution".



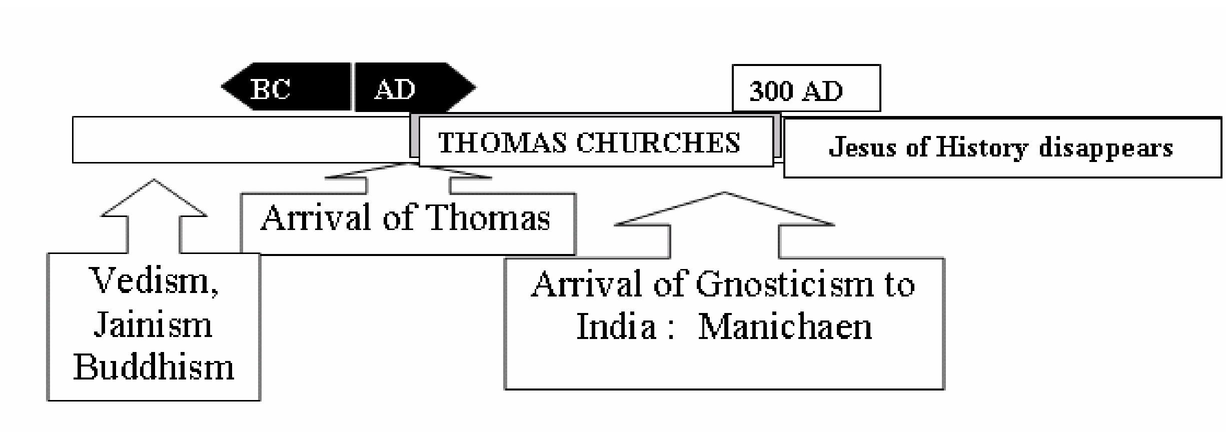
Puhur was an International Port famous for trading in beads and pearls and the Christians took the sea route to the Pepper Port of Muziris in Kerala.

The next reference to this sequel in the palm leaf documents will give some insight into what transpired
"One Maniccavachagar followed them in AD 315 and converted them into Hinduism."
The Manicavachagar mentioned here is not the poet Manicavachagar who lived in the twelfth century AD.

This should give us some insight into the nature of the persecution.

Obviously something happened in the third century AD which made the Christian churches into Gnostic churches. The difference between Historic Christianity and Hinduism is simply the missing Historical Jesus. All through history in every nation, attempts have been made to assimilate all religions into one without a historic objective incarnation.

This is usually known under the head "Gnosticism". Since Gnosticism is not a simple unified doctrinal system,(it is everything and anything) it will be difficult to describe. In the modern terminology, it is what we call New Age Movement. It is a new name. Then it had been known before as Theosophy, Bahai and Hinduism. New names are given and the potion is served in new cups.



Gnosticism started long before Christianity in the Middle Eastern History. The sack of Babylon by the Persian Emperor Cyrus the Great in 539 B.C. ended the Exile of the people of Israel. Cyrus aided the Jews to return and to rebuild, This mixing up of two religions developed into Gnosticism. The basic characteristics can be stated as follows:

- Novel beliefs about Gods. (Denying the Lord)
- Development of myths. (Fables and fantasies)
- Tolerance of different religious beliefs within and outside of Gnosticism. (All religions are the same)
- A belief that salvation is achieved through knowledge. (Self realization – I am God, only I don't know it now)

It is not difficult to see that what destroyed the Early Indian Catholic Church (Hindu Sanadhana Dharma) was the introduction of Gnosticism. Today if we want to define Gnosticism we just have to look at Hinduism.

The Gnostic attempt to take over Christianity is nothing new. It was present soon after the Pentecost. Acts of Aposltes 8 gives a glimpse of the Gnostic Saint Simon Magnus trying to trick Peter. In the ministry of Paul in the isle of Cyprus the opposition was Elymas the magician (Act 13) and Paul warns of Gnostic teachers within the church to Timothy by the names Hymenaus and Alexander. Thus Jude writing his letter warns of their infiltration process (Jud 1:3-4) "Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in privily, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

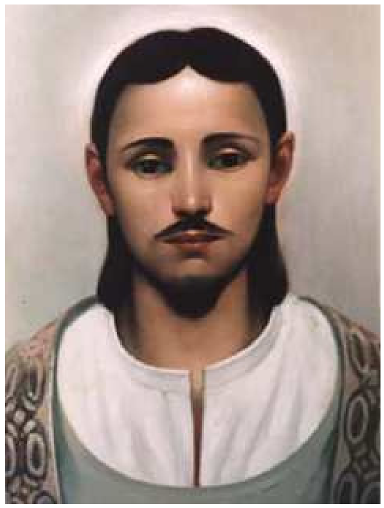
Persian Origins of Pallava Kingdom

Recent historical, anthropological, and linguistic evidence indicates that the Pallavas who ruled Dravidian Chera area were of Parthian origin and the name *Pallava* is just a variant of a well known Sanskrit Pahlava. The Pahluvas were the peoples who spoke Pehlvi, a language of Persia. The Pallavas came to India sometime during second century BC and settled in south-western and southern India. The Markendeya Purana and Brhat Samhita mentions Pahlava and Kamboja settlements. The earliest known coinage in lead issued by the then Pallavs could be dated between 3rd and 4th century AD. The must have come as merchants just as the later colonisers. They became powerful and became Kings only by the third century AD. They had their capital near Kanchipuram. During the 5th century, the Pallavas expanded very fast. At the end of 500 AD, the territory came into the possession of **Simha Vishnu**, and he became the founder of the Pallava dynasty. This gave impetus to the syncretism of Persian and Indian religions absorbing Christianity along with it.

Savism and Vaishnavism were the major religious denominations of the Pallavas. The Early Pallavas claimed to be Brahmins of Bharadwaja gotra and were evidently Vaishnavites. Later they became Saivites. They in fact built large number of temples during their period – among them are the Shore Temples and Chariots of Mahabalipuram shores. These are probably some of the oldest Hindu temples of India

Vaishnavism was more popular in the North while Saivism became popular in the South. Kanchipuram became the center of Persian trade, Gnosticism and of “Hinduism”. Their Dynasty lasted till the Ninth century AD. Hinduism started with the Pal lavas.

Mani (A.D. 215-276)



The major force in Gnostic take over came through Manichean. Mani was born in Mardinu in Babylonia. His father was a Mandaen. This is the only surviving Gnostic religion in Syria now with no more than 20,000 adherents, living in southern Iraq and southwestern Iran. Their main city is Nasiriyya. They are often called the Christians of Saint John . Mandaen in Aramaic stand for 'knowledge', i.e. Greek 'gnosis'. The Babylonian ports of his homeland were "gates to India and other areas further east"

To the Buddhists Mani became Buddha and to the Christians Mani became the Apostle of Jesus and the Paraclete whom Jesus Promised. For many years Mani traveled abroad, founding Manichean communities in Turkestan and India. Then he returned to Syria and did send his father and his disciples (one of the names of Mani's

disciple was Thomas) into India to continue his ministry. His ministry was centered in Kanchi area



In due course he was elevated to the status of another Son of Siva along with Ganapathi (the Lord of Hosts who has the face of an elephant) as the Bala Subra Manian. (Bala means young or child, Subra refers to the emanation of light m the dazzling white)

The Malabar literature refers to him as Magician Manicka Vachagar. Even in the New Testament Gnostics were referred to as Magicians. (Simon Magnus and Elymas were called Magicians)

SubraManyam is represented with a Pea cock since the magicians are said to have the ability to fly like a peacock. (Simon Magnus is said to have died in one of those flights)



The single most important event during this period in Indian history was the migration of new groups of Aryans from Syria and infiltration of their Gnostic theology. Large number of Syrians were displaced from Persia when the religious persecution took place against the Christians and the Gnostics by Zoroastrians. Some of them were rich merchants

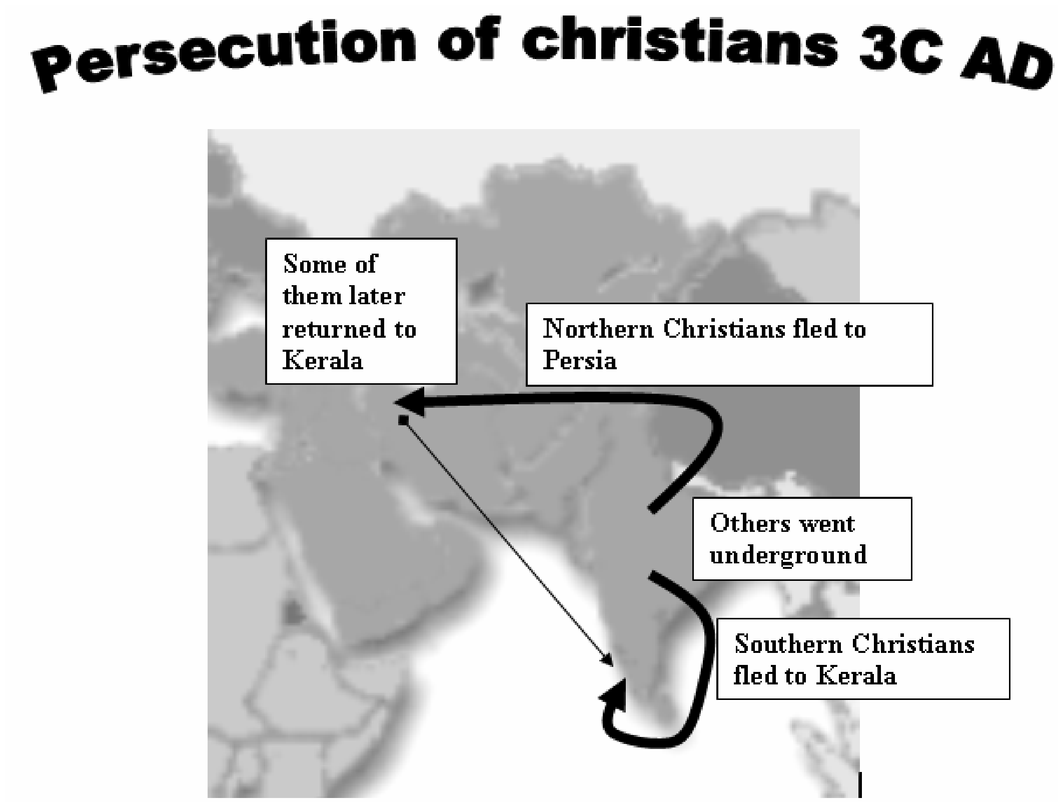
They were received with dignity by the Indian people. Among them was the Thomas of Canaa who came to Malabar Coast. His descendants form the Kananaya Christian Community. South India became the center of communication between Syria and India. This will explain how all of a sudden the Brahminic dominance came into Malabar. Most of the Namboodiri Brahmins trace their origin from this period. Some of the villages where these people lived in Kerala were called Mani-gramakar (meaning "The Village of Mani people" . Mani literally means Pearl. So some interprets that they were Pearl dealers.) Near Kanchipuram we still have a village called after Mani which dates back from the third century AD; the period when Syrian immigration was at its peak and also the time when Gnosticism took root in India.

Thomas Christianity syncretized with Vedic deity of Sun gave rise to Vaishnavism. Manichaenism coming from Persia made it easy to associate Christ with Sun (Son). Most Churches even today faces towards the east to bring in the glorious sunlight

through stained glass windows of multicolors. In the earliest Aryan texts we find Vishnu already rising to the status of the supreme Aryan god. Thus Vaishnavism is the major religion of the North India where the Aryans who came as conquerors lived.

In the South the Persians fleeing under persecution received warm reception. But Saivites retained their control in the South. There had been constant battle for supremacy between these two groups one ridiculing the other with obscene and ridiculous stories. The south Indians were depicted as Asuras (a-suras, non-gods demigods - rakshasas – evil beings- slaves) and the North Indian Aryans were considered as Suras (gods – superior conquerors) The conflict of Siva with Vishnu assumed deadly proportions. Saiva texts ridiculed Vishnu and Vaishnava texts ridiculed Siva. We know that the Saivites and Vaishnavites persecuted each other whenever they were in power. Most people see this as an attempt for Brahminic domination.

Gnostic Christians – the first enemy of Apostolic Christian Churches came along with the trade to India after the 2nd century. As they became dominant the influence of Persian Gnosticism became widespread that it swallowed almost all other religions then in existence in India and changed it to what we today call as Hinduism.(the name came very recently). Since the Thomas Churches of Inner India (i.e. except Malabar/Kerala Churches) did not have the contact with other churches outside of India, they succumbed to the heresy and became the Gnostic Universal Religion the beginning of the Hinduism. The Christians who disagreed and who put up a vigorous fight against the heresy, were finally forced to flee to Kerala where there was a safe refuge until eighth century. Those of the Northern India fled to the Middle East where the Eastern Churches welcomed them. Some of these came back to India during the Persian Immigration under Bishop David in AD 340.



GNOSTICISM

It will not be possible even to touch the hem of Gnosticism because it is vast and varied. Here I attempt to give some limited explanation that may be relevant to Hinduism as a Gnostic religion.

If we define Gnosticism as a mystical religion then it is "as old as humanity itself." It is in this sense Hinduism can claim its ancient heritage from millions of years. Modern Christian Gnostics date their origin from Simon Magus. Gnosticism is an attempt to syncretize all religions and we can find them in all religions.

There were two major groups of Gnosticism: the Syrian Cult and the Alexandrian Cult. The Syrian Cult was led by Simon Magus, who combined Christianity with Egyptian, Chaldean and Persian religions. The Alexandrian group was led by Basilides.

But the greatest force in Gnosticism as far as India was concerned was Manichean the Aryan (216-277) who is said to have founded his alternative Christian Church.

"Mani traveled into what is now western China and as far south as India to spread his gospel. Although he had been held in high regard at the Persian court, by the time he returned home around AD 270, the royal milieu had changed. The priestly caste of the ancient Persian religion Zoroastrianism resented Mani's presence and succeeded in exerting considerable political pressure on the new king, Bharam I, to get rid of him. Mani was imprisoned, and in AD 276, he was crucified and his corpse flayed."
- *Ancient Wisdom and Secret Sects*

The Gnosis

Gnosis means knowledge. The basis tenet is the man is bound by cycle of birth and death until he realizes himself as god. This is called Self Realization in Modern Hinduism.

Some of the basic beliefs of Gnosticism are as follows:

The 'self,' the 'I' of the gnostic, his 'spirit' or soul, is unalterably divine.

This 'I,' however, has fallen into this world, has been imprisoned and anaesthetized by it, and cannot free itself from it.

Only a divine 'call' from the world of light loosens the bonds of captivity.

But only at the end of the world does the divine element in a man return again to its home.

Manichaean Psalm

"I am in everything. I bear the skies. I am the foundation. I support the earths. I am the Light that shines forth, that gives joy to the souls.
I am the life of the world; I am the milk that is in all trees; I am the sweet water that is beneath the sons of matter...
I bore these things until I had fulfilled the will of my father; the First Man is my father whose will I have carried out...
O soul, raise your eyes to the height and contemplate your bond...look, your Fathers are calling you."

No one can fail to see the basic Hinduism in Mani.

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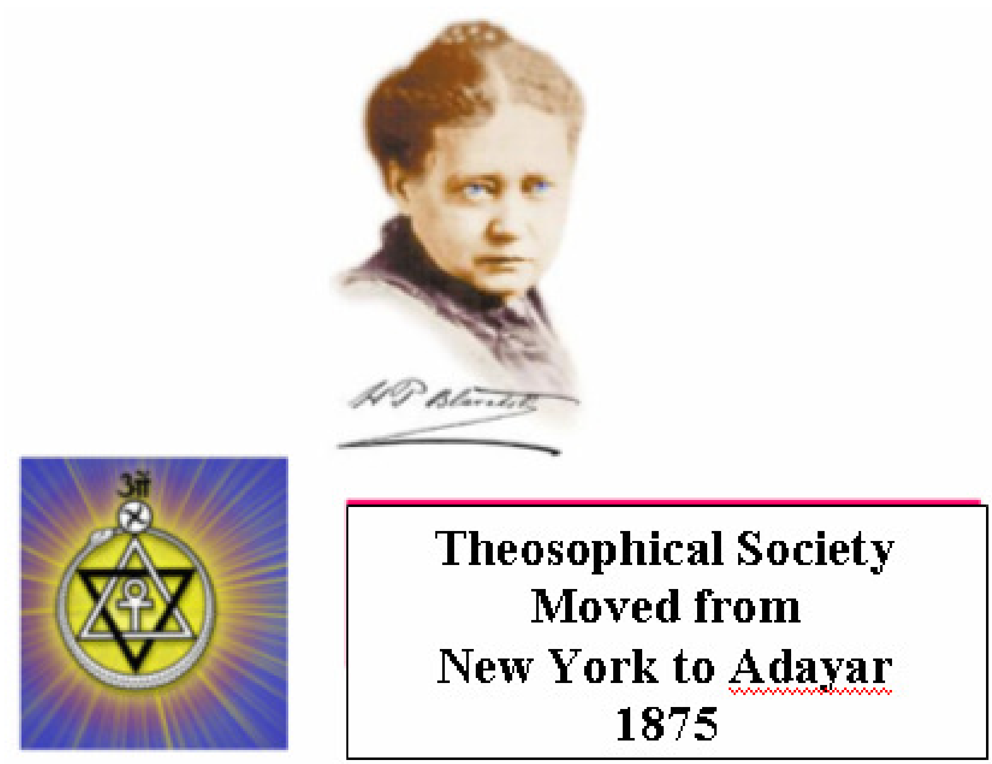
FORMATION OF HINDUISM

The unification of these fighting denominations came in recently. It started with the coming of the Europeans into India, who knew Christianity only in its Greco-Roman form. When they encountered a variety of religion they classified them as Christian and Hindu. Thus when the British Empire occupied India on 31 December, 1600 AD they classified religions as Christian, Muslim and Hindu. Thereby they practically gave an edge to the further unification of all Indian religious forms. What they implied by Hinduism was that they are of India. But later as the independence movement started, it gave impetus to unite all religions in an attempt to oppose the British. This resulted in the Freedom of India on 15 August 1947.

One of the other unifying forces was the arrival of Theosophical Society founded by Madam Madame Blavatsky. Theosophy is the name Blavatsky gave to that portion of knowledge that she brought from the “masters” to the world. (The Masters are secret Spiritual beings who are waiting to reveal the secrets of god and man to those who seek for it) It comes from the term "Theosophia" used by the Neoplatonists to mean literally "knowledge (Sophia) of the divine (Theo)". Helena Petrovna Hahn was born on August 12, 1831 and died May 8, 1891 London, England. She is better known as Helena Blavatsky or Madame Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophy. . She did much to

spread Eastern religious, philosophical and occult concepts throughout the Western world.

It was in 1873 that she emigrated to New York City. She was a psychic and a medium. She was able to perform levitation, clairvoyance, out-of-body projection, telepathy, and clairaudience materialization. She founded the Theosophical Society in September 1875, with Henry Steel Olcott, William Quan Judge and others. Theosophical Society moved its Head Quarters to India in Adyar, Madras in the same year.



Theosophy

Concise Oxford Dictionary describes Theosophy as "any of various philosophies professing to achieve a knowledge of God by spiritual ecstasy, direct intuition, or special individual relations, esp. a modern movement following Hindu and Buddhist teachings and seeking universal brotherhood."

Adherents of Theosophy maintain that it is a "body of truth" that forms the basis of all religions. Theosophy, they claim, represents a modern face of Sanatana Dharma, "the Eternal Truth," as the proper religion.

This resurgence of Indian ethos was tied to the Indian Independence movement and the Theosophical Society gave the leadership.

Madam Annie Besant of England was the President of the Theosophical Society. She established the Indian Home Rule League in 1916 and was the first President of this Indian Independence Movement. The next year Madame Besant became the first President of the Indian National Congress (1917) which led the country to freedom in 1947. During the process all religious groups were drawn into the net, one way or other, since it was tied to Indian Independence.



This completed the process of transforming the Gnostic Indian religious sects into a unified yet loose entity today known as Hinduism.

In the fight for freedom, new slogans were coined. One of them was "**One God, One Religion and One Nation**".

In the course of time It took slight variations.



One variation was "**Under Heaven, One Family**" which tried to obliterate and ignore religious differences. **Moral Rearmament Movement** was another common inter-religious movement which emphasized that. Many of my generations were deeply involved in it and joined hands with political movements called by varying names. This included **Marxism** which became the proponent of fight against the imperialistic oppression of the British and colonialism. **Gandhiji**'s meetings started with readings from Hindu, Christian and Muslim scriptures. Even after the Independence these movements continued. Marxism became the central spiritual forum for the downtrodden and the oppressed. Many Christians took it as a spiritual movement for ushering in the Kingdom of God.

Sarvodaya Movement emphasized the oneness of Mankind and the only way to the omega point for man as the collective sharing.

Sarvodaya

The word Sarvodaya was coined by Mahatma Gandhi to mean "the welfare of all" and its current usage means the "awakening of all." This includes the individual, the family, the group, the nation, and the world.

Shramadana means "the gift of voluntary sharing of one's labor, time, thoughts, energy, money, and other resources". The Sarvodaya Movement is based upon the following philosophical principles: sharing, compassion self-sufficiency, constructive action, truthful communication, equality, development, democracy, and community.

Once the freedom was won, all these slogans and movements became a means of exploitation and rhetoric in politics.

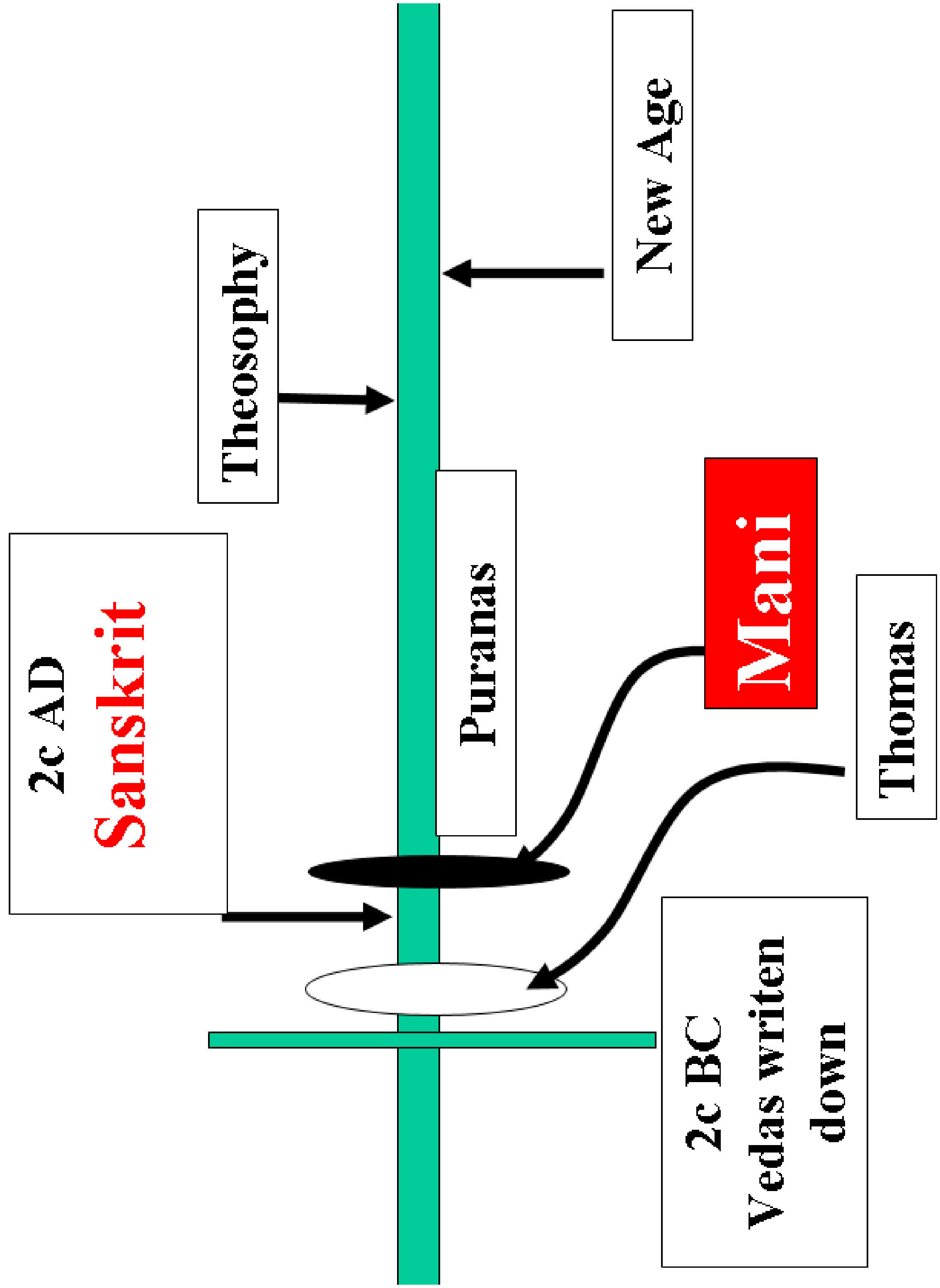
In the national religious front new Hindu revival took place in the form of **Arya Samaj** under Maharishi Swami Dayanand Saraswati in Bombay on April 7th, 1875 and the Arya Samaj was founded in the pre-independence era of India. The purpose was to move the Hindu Dharma away and go back to the teachings of Vedas. The goal of the Arya Samaj has always been, “Krinvanto Vishvam Aryam”, which translates as, “ Make this World Aryan.”

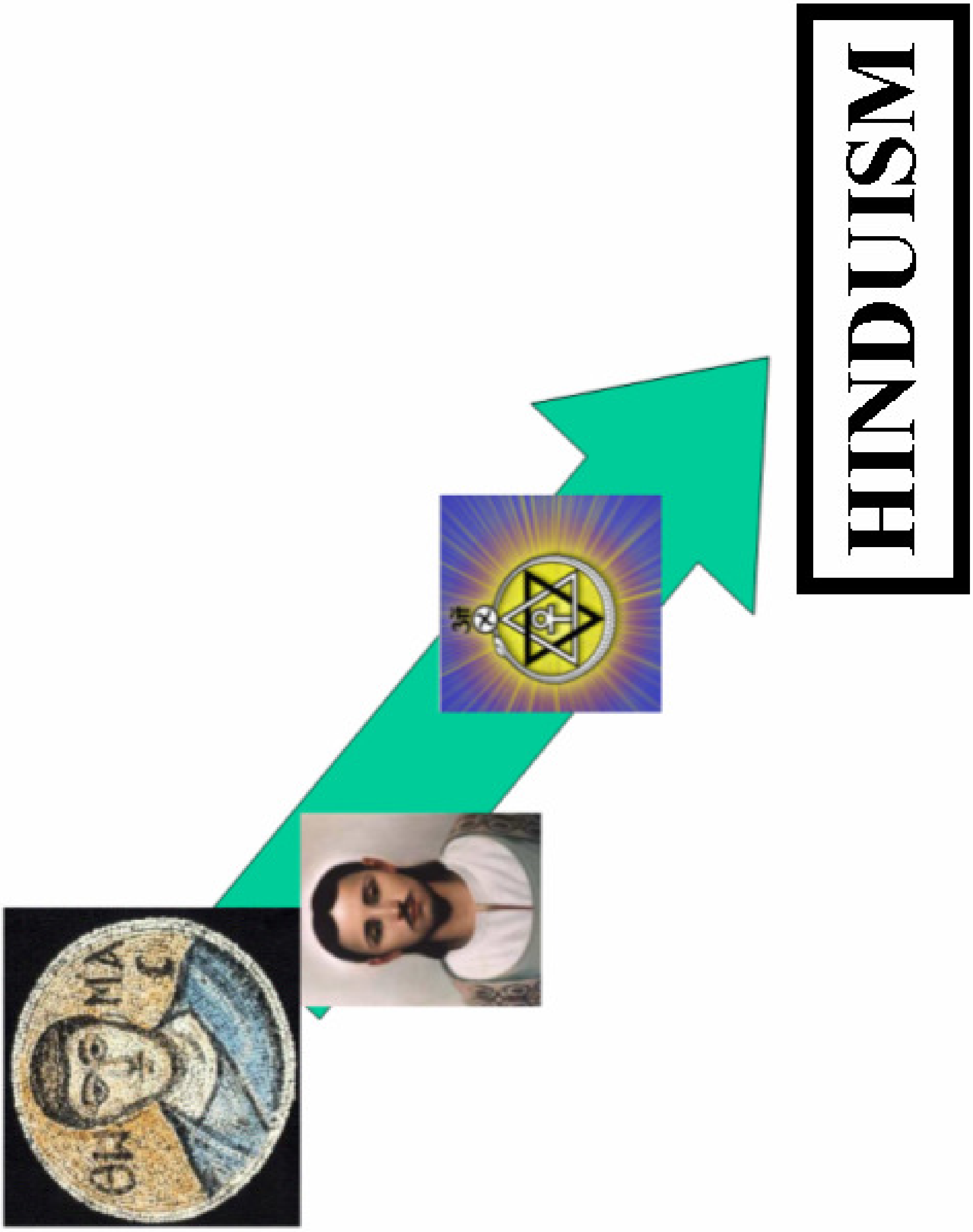


Once seperated from the Historic Christianity, the gnostic Christians underwent syncretic amalgamation with other religions. In that process, both Buddhism and Jainism practically vanished from India except in certain pockets. Since gnosticism by its nature does not have a specific theological system, a single system of morality, or a central religious organization Hinduism is not a single religion. . It consists of "*thousands of different religious groups that have evolved in India since 1500 BCE*."

The Hindus are divided into three main classes, viz., Vaishnavas who worship Vishnu; Saivas who worship Siva; and Saktas who worship Devi or the Mother . In addition, there are the Sauras, who worship the Sun-God; Ganapatyas who worship Ganesa; and Kaumaras who worship Skanda. In addition there are other groups that worship other gods and spirits – some good and some evil. These groups were never united and were constantly fighting with each other.

The word Hinduism came into existence as the name of a religion only with the coming of the British. The British classified the religions into three classes: Christians, Muslims and all the others. “All the others“ were called Hindus – which simply meant “of India”. When the people of India began to struggle for independence these religious denominations found a common enemy and that is what united them and the name Hinduism became meaningful symbol of national unity and the name got stuck. In that sense, Hinduism was the product of the British ignorance. Anything that is not Christian or Muslim came to mean Hindu. Dropping out the idols, the witchcraft and other practices what is exported as Hinduism is essentially the Gnostic Christianity.


New Age
Theosophy
2c AD
Sanskrit
Puranas
Mani
Thomas
2c BC
Vedas writen
down


HINDUISM

12



HINDUISM IN KERALA

Kerala is a narrow strip of land along India's southwest coast, covering 38,863 sq. km and comprising approximately one percent of India's total land. The land strip is sandwiched between the Western Ghats (Sahya Mountains) in the east and the Arabian Sea in the west. The hill is filled with spices and wild life yielding precious pepper, ginger, peacocks and elephant tusks. As a result of its geographical location Kerala was sheltered from the ravages of the rest of the continent On the West it has a long coastline with several deep harbors which had been open long before the

Christian era for trade and travel. Because of the precious commodities which were found no where else in the world, Kerala has attracted foreign trade even before the Roman Period. Muziris was the main port of trade. It is this route that brought St.Thomas to India.

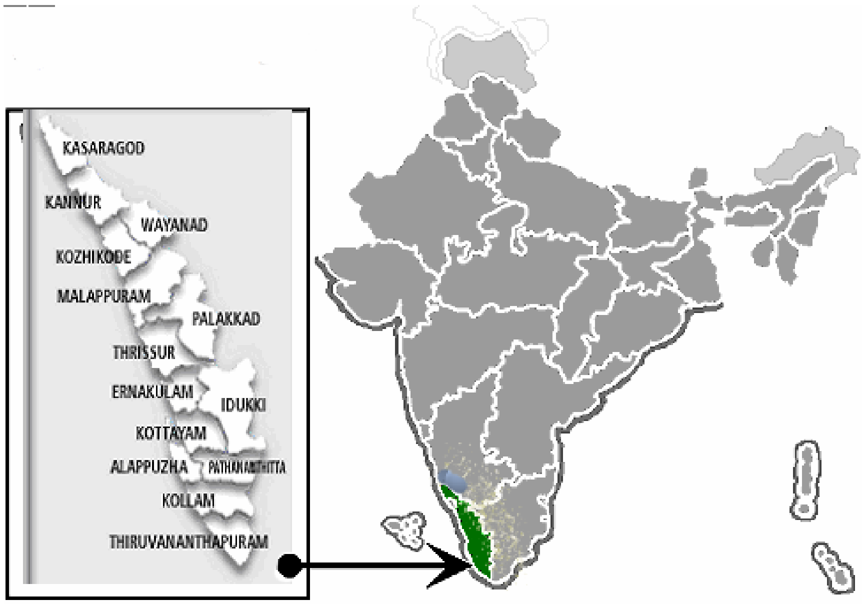



Black Pepper and Ginger




Elephant and Peacock

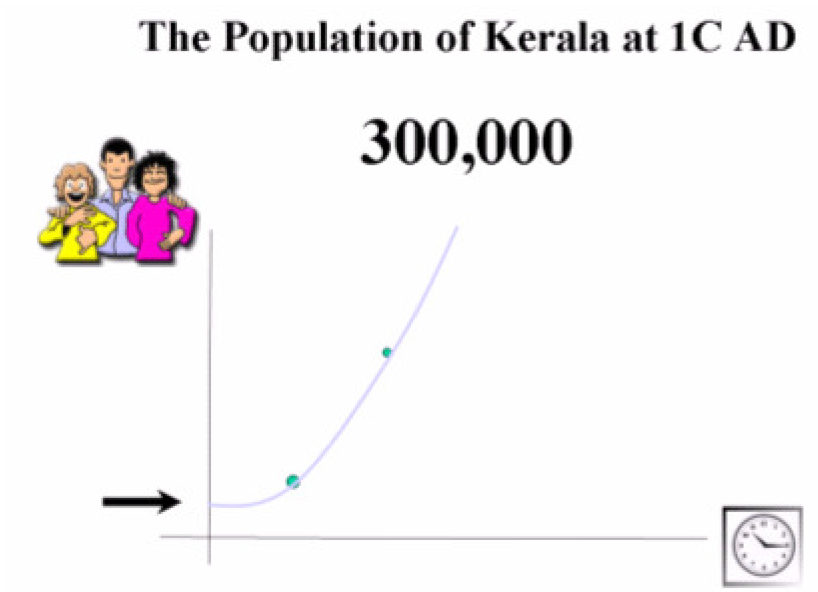




The Early Aryan invasion reached Kerala by the seventh century BC. Like Rome and Macedonia, Aryans were also not able to control these far off areas simply because of lack of long range communications of that period. The Mahabharata and Purana stories indicate that they left the local Kings and Warlords in charge of the country before they retreated. A small group of Aryans were left behind among the Dravidians of the South who acted as advisers to the Kings and Chiefs. But these advisers were soon thrown out.

In the first visit Thomas established a Jewish Church from among the Jewish community in Cochin area. He has ordained one Kepha as the head of the church. It was during his second extended visit that Thomas converted several Brahmin families along with 3000 others from different religion and profession to form the famous eight early Churches of Kerala.

If we extrapolate the population of Kerala for the first century, the number of people in Kerala would not have been more than three hundred thousand. This amounts to one percent of the total population as the seed. The entire Vedic Brahmin community most embraced the New Way. That is why we see have no historical evidence for Brahmin family settlements before the sixth century AD.



Thomas appointed these Brahmin families as teachers. These included Pakalomattam, Shankarapuri, Kalli, and Kaaliyankavu in the north and Thayyil, Pattamukkil, Manki, and Madathilen. St. Thomas established seven and a half Churches in eight different villages in Kerala.

The seven villages are:

1. Cranganore or Maliankara (Present Kodungallore)
2. Palur or Palayur (A place near Thrissur)
3. Paraur or Kottukavu (A Place near Cochin)
4. Kokkamangalam (A place between Allappy and Kottayam)
5. Niranam (A place near Tiruvalla)
6. Chayal or Nilakkal (An interior hill side place near Sabarimala)
7. Quilon or Kollam

Eighth village had a small church (referred to as “half church” - "Arappalli") which was at Thiruvankottu..

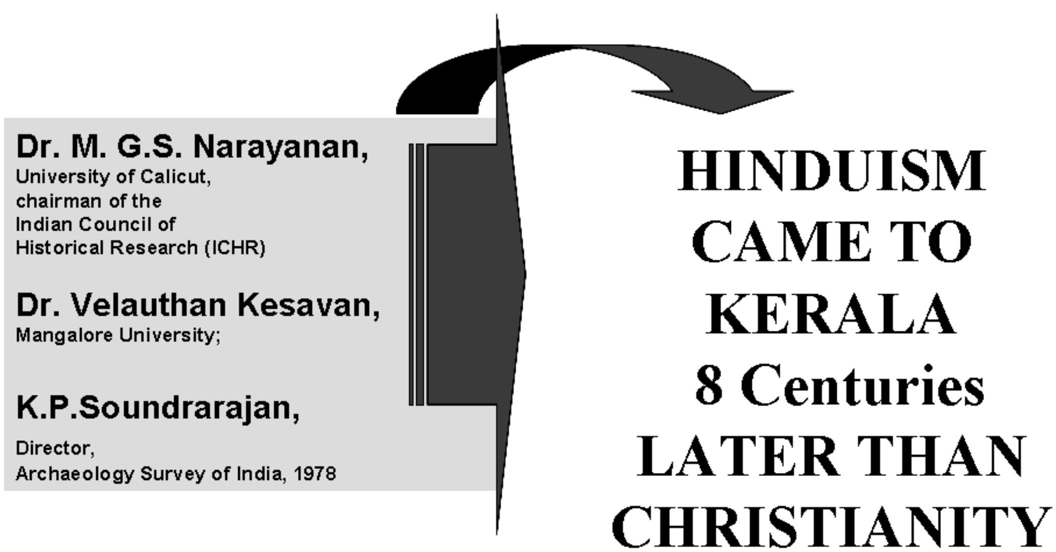
Traditionally these Christians were called Nazranis – to mean followers of the one from Nazareth.

However the history of Kerala goes blank from the first century to the eighth century AD, except for a few copper plates to indicate extensive immigration of Syrians into Kerala.

Eye Opening Archeological Discoveries

Recent studies in archaeology and carbon dating have led to some astounding findings which need to be explained. Dr. M. G.S. Narayanan, University of Calicut, Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR); Dr. Velauthan Kesavan, of Mangalore University; and K.P.Soundrarajan, Director, Archaeology Survey of India, (1978) in their studies on idols of Kerala came across a strange fact. Whereas there are a large number of Jain and Buddhist art and artifacts, there are no idols that can be associated with Hinduism until the eighth Century AD. Similarly there are no Hindu Temples predating eighth Century.

Thus we come to the astounding fact::



Here are some of the dates of the earliest Idols found in Kerala.

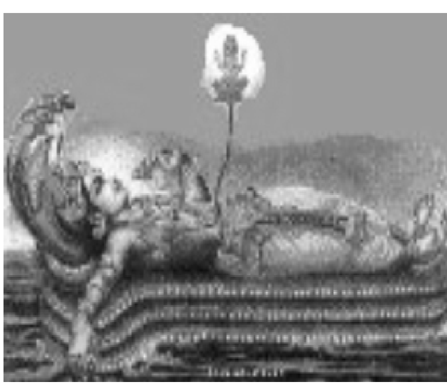
(These are the names of the idols (Vigraha). Glance through the dates.)

1. Aja Eka Pada: First appears in Thondamandalam in the **8th C**., in Cholamandalam in the **11th C**., in Pandimandalam in the **13th C**.
2. ArdhaNareeswara: Appears in S.India only after the 7th C. and in Kerala only after the **9th C**.
3. AnanthaShayi: South India 6th C. and Kerala **8th C**.
4. DakshinaMoorthy: Kerala **8th C.**
5. Ganesha: Kerala **8th C.**
6. Harihara: Kerala **11th C**.
7. varahareshvara: **13th C.**
8. Jeshta: **11th C.**
9. Lingothbhava: Post-**11th C.**
10. SapthaMatha: **14th C.**
11. TriMoorthy: **8th C**.

This list simply shows that the earliest idols in Kerala came into existence only by eighth century AD ,

THE EARLIEST HINDU IDOLS OF KERALA

K.P.Soundrarajan,
Director,
Archaeology Survey of India, 1978



Vigrahas (Idols)
in Kerala
came later than
8th C AD

On the other hand Pahlavi Crosses appear by the first century onward, Remember that Pahlavi was also the language of the Kingdom of Gondophores and of the Pallava dynasty of Tamil Nadu.. Here are three first century Crosses found in the Kottayam Church, Kerala.

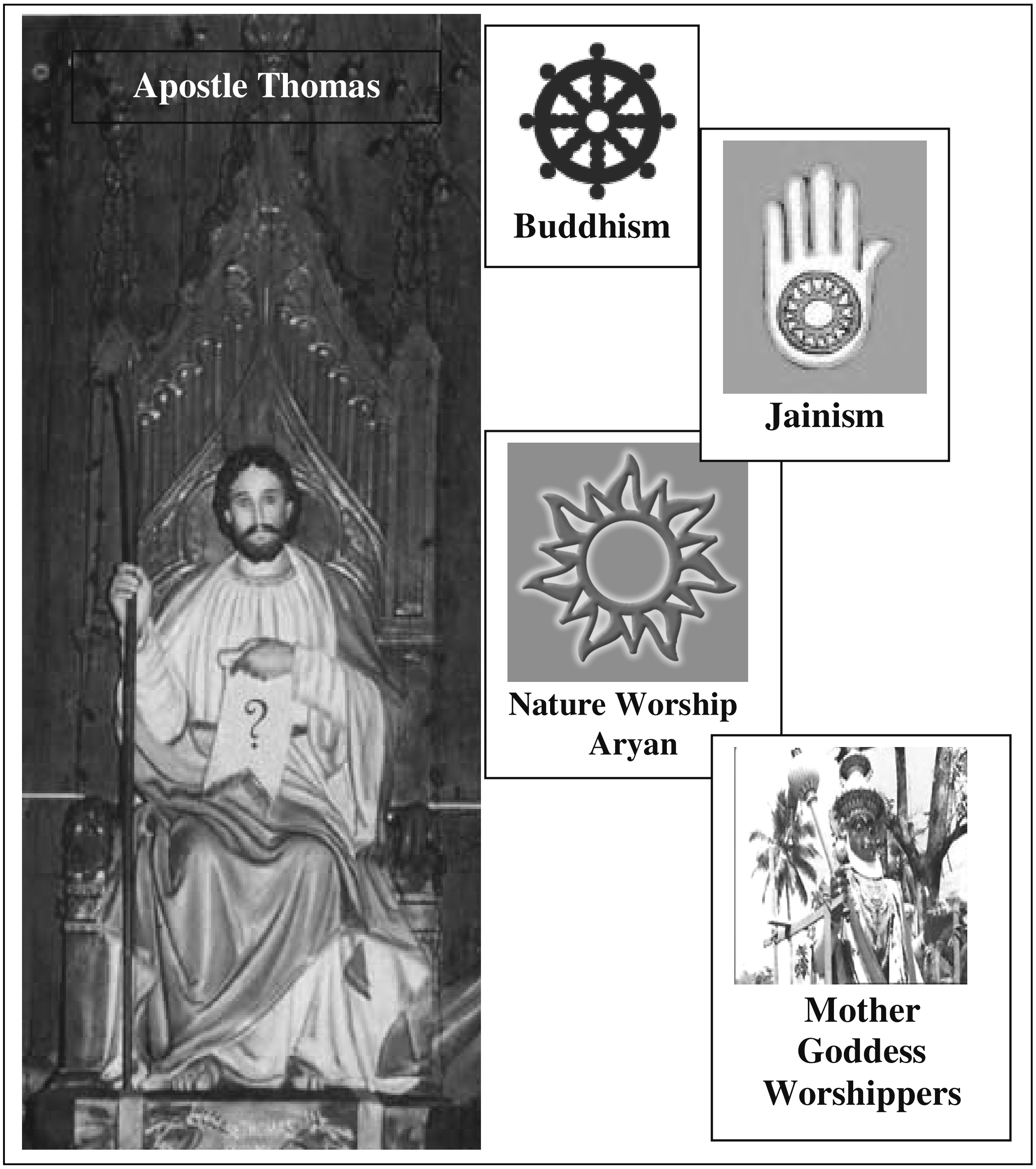




The only conclusion we can make is that Christianity replaced most of the other religions and was the main religion of Kerala until eighth Century.

Other Pahlavi crosses are found in St. Thomas Mount, Kadamattam, Muttuchira, and Alangad.




Apostle Thomas
?
Buddhism
Jainism
Nature Worship
Aryan
Mother
Goddess
Worshippers

CHRISTIANITY

was the main religion

of

Kerala

until

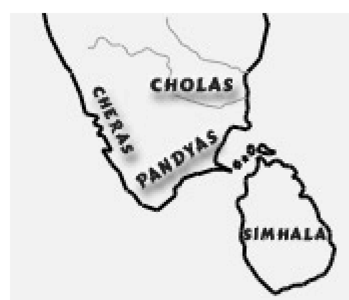
8thC AD

13

KALABHRA INTERREGNUM
THE DARK AGES OF SOUTH INDIA

There is something strange about the History of South India, especially of Kerala. Whereas we have unbroken history of the reigns of Kings elsewhere in India, the history of South India is blank from the coming of St. Thomas until around fifth century for most South Indian states (Chola and Pandya States) and until around eighth century in Kerala. .

Kalabhra Interregnum



The people who controlled South India during this period is referred to as Kalabhas. But nothing of their origin, character, religion or social structure is known. One even wonders whether these were intentionally destroyed. Blotting out names and history was an age-old method practiced in ancient cultures. Historians affirm that this is

exactly what happened in the case of South India as a whole until the fifth century. In Kerala this period extended until the eighth century.

Kalabhras were the South Indian dynasty who between the third and the 6th century C.E. ruled over entire Tamil country, displacing the ancient Chola, Pandya and Chera dynasties. Information about their origin and details about their reign is scarce. They did not leave any artifacts or monuments. The only source of information on them is the scattered mentions in Buddhist and Jain literature. They were displaced around the 7th century by the revival of Pallava and Pandya power. .

Most historians think that there was a group of Buddhist or Jain marauders who were anti-Brahminic anti-ritualistic who forcefully occupied the land during this period and whose identity is not known. These people are called Kalabhras. Thus we have the Wikipedia statement:

Vaishnava epigraphists either destroyed the history of Kalabhras or twisted it beyond normal understanding of common people.

"Historians speculate that these people followed Buddhist or Jain faiths and were antagonistic towards the Hindu and Brahminical religions adhered by the majority of inhabitants of the Tamil region during the early centuries C.E. As a result Hindu scholars and authors who followed their decline in the 7th and 8th century C.E. may have expunged any mention of them in their texts and generally tended to paint their rule in a negative light. It is perhaps due to this reason, the period of their rule is known as a 'Dark Age' – an "interregnum".

It is referred to as Kalabhra interregnum- the Dark Ages of Kalabhra Period. It is called a dark age, not because it was anything evil or dark, but because of the lack of information about the period. It is as though somebody took a marker and covered these pages with black ink. It is an age that has been blacked out by some body because they did not like the Kalabrahs and their ways. However identification of who this Kalabhra has remained a problem.

There had been a number of attempts to identify the Kalabhras based on the etymology of the word.

Some attempts in Identification Kalabhras

The identification of the Kalabhras is difficult. They have been identified with the line of Muttaraiyar of Kondubalur (eighth to eleventh century C.E.). Others regard them as Karnatas on the strength of a reference in Tamil literature to the rule of a Karnata king over Madurai. A third view is that the Kalabhras were Kalappalar, belonging to Vellala community and referred to in Tamil literature and inscriptions. But the most satisfactory theory identifies the Kalabhras with the Kalavar, and the chieftains of this tribe mentioned in Sangam literature are Tiraiyan of Pavattiri and Pulli of Vengadam or Tirupati. The latter is described as the cattle lifting robber chief of the frontier. The Kalavar must have been dislodged from their habitat near Tirupati by political events of the third century A.D., viz. the fall of the Satavahanas and the rise of Pallavas, resulting in political confusion in Tondaimandalam.

Kalabhra Interregnum
(The Dark Ages)
was the result of an attempt
to obliterate the
Christian Period
of Caelobothras.

While there is no doubt that Buddhism and Jainism (coexisting with Vedism and local religions) existed in Kerala since second century BC (at the least); why should there be a sudden change in their attitude in the first century AD that they are considered heretical during that period (heretical to what? Were they not heretical before?) cannot be explained . The very basis of Buddhism and Jainism are extreme non-violence and respect for life. (This is the principle of Ahimsa – they are not allowed even to kill an insect) and no where in India they have ever attacked another religion or kingdom. In fact Asoka became a Buddhist on seeing the bloodshed he has caused in war. So Jain or Buddhist groups could not really be the Kalabhras.

So we have to look elsewhere for the real “Kalabhras”. It may be legitimately assumed that it came out of the epithets ***"Cerobothras'*** of the Periplus. Pliny the Roman historian of the first century calls them as ***Caelobothras.*** These may be the foreigner’s

effort to pronouce what Asoka named as **"*Keralaputra*"** referring to the Sons of Kerala. All other given explanations are clearly forced.

54. Tyndis is of the **Kingdom of Cerobothra**; it is a village in plain sight by the sea. **Muziris,** of the same kingdom, abounds in ships sent there with cargoes from Arabia, and by the Greeks; it is located on a river, distant from Tyndis by river and sea five hundred stadia, and up the river from the shore twenty stadia. Nelcynda is distant from Muziris by river and sea about five hundred stadia, and is of another Kingdom, the **Pandian.** This place also is situated on a river, about one hundred and twenty stadia from the sea.

Page Number: 50-59. Author: Periplus. . Ancient History Sourcebook
Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchant of the First Century
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/periplus.html

The king of Muziris, at the date of publication, was Caelobothras.

Ancient History Sourcebook:
Pliny: *Natural History* 6.96-111. (On India)
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/pliny-india.html

The Muthuraja of Tamilnadu, the Mudiraja of Karnataka and Mudiraj of Andhra Pradesh are one and the same people having the same blood and professional background.

Mudiraj people are believed to be the descendants of Kalabhra kings of South India who invaded South Indian Peninsula and uprooted the kingdoms ruled by Adhirajas (Great Kings) of Chola, Chera and Pandya dynasties. The kalabhra kings who played a great havoc in South Indian Penensula by snacthing away the kingdoms of the then ADHIRAJAS declared them as the real GREAT KINGS (MUDIRAJAS).

Christians in Kerala are still known as MAHAPILLAI (Sons of the Kings)

MUNDA LEGEND

"The Cheras of the Chotanagpur region, the ancestors of Keralites, had a great king called Bali who governed the Dinajpur area; he was an asur, who did not worship Vishnu, the Aryan God. He continued to worship the native Munda god, Lord Shiva. After being defeated by the Vaishnavites the Mundas were forced to settle down in Kerala. The Mahabali-story of the Keralites, in the Munda-Chera tradition, indicates the triumph of the Vaishnavite brand of Aryans over the Shiva-worshipping Munda-Cheras. Bali/Balia is a common personal name among the Mundas."

"In Tamil Sangam-work, Puram, Maveli appears as the Vellala chief of Milalaikurram. There are documentary evidence that there was a Christian Church among them."

Dr. Zacharias Thundy, Northern Michigan University

Thus we see the Bali kingdom covered most of the South India.

Speculation of the Indian historians always left out the impact of St.Thomas and his ministry. A similar willful neglect on this historical reality is also seen in every modern Hindu History. All Hindu historians agree that for some reason Vedic gods got extinct and new gods of Hinduism came in during the first century AD. But there is no reason given!. A sudden change for no reason? They also agree that St.Thomas came to India and had his ministry from North India to South India. But they refuse to see the connection. There is an intentional blacking out or ignoring of the Christian presence and influence anywhere in India. This is really the basic Kalabhra Interregnum. What I am suggesting is that the period referred here as "Black Age" is the epithet given to the Christendom in South India by the later Gnostic Brahminic historians. It was simply a period which they did not want to remember.

Christianity was indeed the religion that supplanted Vedism. But this was soon followed by intense conflict between Christians of Thomas and the Gnostic heresies which came from Syria (Aryan – Persian) by the second century AD. Mani came to India and China taking the Silk route and hence his ministry was concentrated initially in the

North India. In the North India this conflict easily resulted in the destruction of Christian churches soon after the fall of Taxila kingdom. Most Christian Churches went underground as a result of persecution and others fled to Syria where the Syrian churches gave them refuge. In the South India the story was different. All the three regions of Dravidia – the Chola, Chera and Pandya were ruled by Christians –in the Indian myth - by an Asura King called Maha Bali. It is this period when Maha Bali ruled that came to be the Dark Ages of South India which will explain all known facts. All information on this period was wilfully destroyed by the new religious leaders of India. We will be able to identify them from history that followed this period.

Considering the history of South India, it appears that Kalabhras can be identified with the Mahabali's Christian Kingdom, ***Caelobothras***, which covered the three worlds – Chola, Chera and Pandya at the first century. We will take up this story in the next chapter.



The Possible extent of Kalbhra Empire - Mahabali Empire

A good look at the time line of south Indian history will give lots of insight. The Time line goes like this:

In Chola and Pandya regions of South India

Sanga Kalam BC 3000 – AD 100	Sangam Maruvia Kalam AD 100 – 500 **Kalabhra interregnum AD 150 - 500**	Bhakthi Or The Pallava Period AD 500 - 800	Epic or Chola Period AD 800 - 1200

Even though history was blanked out, we still have the secular Tamil literature created in Tamil by the association of poets called Sangam. They give some insight of the period as a golden era.

When it came out of the Kalabhra Interregnum period it was the Pallavas who were ruling the Pandya and the Chola Kingdoms. We should be able to assume legitimately that the decimers of Kalabhras were indeed Pallavas.

The Early Pallavas claimed to be Brahmins of Bharadwaja gotra. They styled themselves as *Brahma Ksnatriyas*. They were Brahmins who took arms.

Who were the Pallavas?

Pallavas are originaly connected to the Pahlavas of Iran. This Pahlava tribe of Indo-Iranian descent migrated Southward and first settled in Krishna River valley. This region is called Pallavanadu even today. Pallavas later extended their territory and established their capital in Kancheepuram. The Early Pallavas claimed to be Brahmins of Bharadwaja gotra. They styled themselves as *Brahma Ksnatriyas* (Brahmins in Pursuit of arms). Later by the fifth century CE, the Pallavas were regarded as Kshatriyas. They were followers of the Brahmanical religion.



Pallava coin 500 – 675 AD

The earliest known coinage in lead issued by the Pallavs dated between 3rd and 4th century AD.

It is easy to see that the Kalabhras were actually defeated and displaced by the Pallavas of Syrian origin. Though they were Brahmins they became a terrorist group to take over the Kalabhra Empire. It was this dynasty who gave refuge to the Gnostics from Syria and were the architects of modern Vaishnavism. Pallavas are famed for their temples which are spread all over Tamil Nadu.

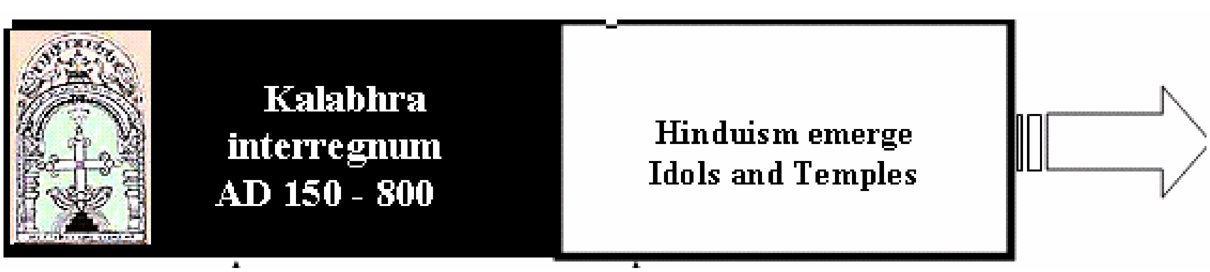
Timeline:	Foreign Kingdoms	Northern Empires	Southern Kingdoms	Kerala
600 BC		• Magadha	• Pandyan	
500 BC	(Persian rule)	• Nanda empire		
400 BC	(Greek conquests)			Chera Kings
300BC			• Cholas	
200 BCE	• Indo-Greek kingdom	• Maurya • Satavahana		
100 BC		•		
	• Indo-Scythians • Indo-Parthian Kingdom	• Sunga • Kuninda		
100 AD	• Kushan Empire	• • Kalinga	Kalabhras	
200 AD	• Western Kshatrapas			
300AD 400AD	• Indo-Sassanians			
600AD	• Kidarite Kingdom • Indo-Hephthalites	• Gupta	Pallavas	
800AD		• Pala	Chalukya	Perumals



"Bhakti and temple-building movements went hand in hand after the Kalabhra interregnum ended. There was a definite paradigm shift from Vedic yajnas to archa worship in temples and the Velvikkudi copperplates are eloquent witness to the rejuvenation of the Vedic-Brahmanic religion in South India." (The Hindu, Sunday, Dec 23, 2001)

However Kerala survived the assault of gnosticism for another three centuries.

As a result the Kalabhra Interregnum extended till the eighth century in Kerala. It ended with the coming of Brahmins from outside India with Parasurama. At the end of eighth century we see temples and idols appear all of a sudden in Kerala.



Thus soon after the Kalabhra interregnum we see an upsurge of Hinduism specifically of Vaishnavite tradition both in Tamil region and in Kerala. Thus it is certain that the rewriting of history was done by these people to blot out the memory of the vast and powerful history of the Indian Christendom. Apparently they succeeded.

"At the end of the eighth century A.D, South Indian kingdoms such as the Pallavas, the Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas and the Pandyas succeeded in overthrowing the Kalabhras." (http://www.indiasite.com/kerala/history.html)

“The revival of Hinduism from its root during the Kalabhras spurred the construction of numerous temples and these in turn generated Saiva and Viashnava devotional literature.”



The Shore Temple at Mamallapuram, built by the Pallava King Rajasimha (c. 700 - 728), is the earliest temple in Southern India. Its three sanctuaries are dedicated to Vishnu and Shiva.

14

THE FIRST VAISHNAVA CONQUEST OF KERALA

You can deliberately obliterate all evidences, but the collective memory of the community could not be suppressed. They are handed down from generation to generation and still exist as myths and legends and festivals of Kerala.

The Politics of Rewriting History in India.

K.N. PANIKKAR

Although elements which constitute myth are not verifiable like historical facts, myths do represent reality even if symbolically and metaphorically. Myths are essentially illusory representations of phenomena and as such do not help discover the historicity of events and by the very nature of representation they tend to mask the reality. Yet, there are no myths in which reality is not embedded in some form, be they origin, explanatory or legitimatory myths. This integral connection between myth and history facilitates the transmutation of the latter into the former and through that change, the existing historical consciousness in society.
http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl1801/18010730.htm

The biggest festival of Kerala is “Onam” which is associated with the myth of Vamana. It tell the story of how Vishnu (the god of Vaishanavites) defeated the Asura King Mahabali and pushed him down to the lower most part of the World – Kerala. This. I believe tells the root story of how the Chola and Pandya areas of the Christian Kingdom of Mahabali was ripped off and taken over my the Pallavas..

The Story Behind the Onam Festival

A long long time ago, an Asura (demon) king called Mahabali ruled Kerala. He was a wise, benevolent and judicious ruler and beloved of his subjects. Soon he conquered all the three worlds. Aditi, the mother of Devas went to Vishnu for help.

Vishnu incarnated in the form of a dwarf called Vamana and approached Mahabali while he was performing a sacrifice (*yajn)* and asked for alms Mahabali granted him a wish.

The Vamana asked for three paces of land for his living — and the king agreed to it. Vamana grew to great proportions. In the first step, he covered the heavens and with the second, he covered the netherworld. Realizing that Vamana's third step will destroy the earth, Mahabali offered his head as the last step in order to save this world.

Vishnu pushed him to the netherworld, but before banishing him to the underworld, Vishnu granted him a boon. He was allowed to return once a year to visit his people. It is during this day, called Onam, that Kerala pays tribute to the memory of this benign king who gave his life for his people

There is an expectation that one day Maha Bali will return and establish his glorious kingdom once again on the eath.

The Festival of Onam
celebrates the
“Rule of the Great Sacrifice”
the Christian Commune of Kerala.

It was destroyed by the deceit of Vishnu of Vaishanavite

Onam Celebrates the Christian Rule of Kerala

The name Mahabali literally means the Great Sacrifice.(Maha = Great; Bali = Sacrifice) This

epithet does not fit any other person other than Christ. It probably was a name for Christian Kings or the general epithet for Christians in India. It is actually strange that the story is kept still as a legend and myth, in spite of the fact it shows how Vishnu, the great and mighty god of Vaishanvites, had to resort to deception and trickery to kill a King who is described only in superlative terms even in their own Puranas**.** This cannot be explained in any other terms other than as a story of how Brahmin (Iran - Aryan) dominated Vaishnavism tried to destroy Christianity in South India. Silk route brought in Manichaen missions first into Northern India and it fell victim to the heresy. When Christianity became powerful in South India, the Northern heretics resorted to trickery.

This identification of Mahabali with Christ or Christians is also supported by pre-cosmic myth of Palaazhi Mathanam (the story of churning of the cosmic milky way to separate the good from the evil.) in which Mahabali was killed and was brought back to life. Here the subtle implication of the sacrifice, death and resurrection of Mahabali is implied.

Mahatma Phule sees this story as an attempt by the Aryans to dominate the rest of India:

"Slavery"
by
Mahatma Jotirao Govindrao Phule.
The chapter :`Baliraja'

"Baliraja's kingdom, extended from Maharashtra to Srilanka and northwards to Ayodhya and Benares. It was attacked by the Dwija (Aryan), Vamana. Dalit kings such as Hiranyakashyapu had also been attacked by Dwija kings as a racial battle for power zigzagged across the subcontinent. The story of Prahlada is then interpreted as that of the son of the royal Hiranyakashayapu dynasty being subtly influenced by the Machiavellian Dwija, Narasimha, to become a collaborator of an `invasive' hegemonic discourse.."

Mahatma Jyotirao Phule (1827 -1890) was an activist and social reformer from Maharashtra, critical of caste relations in Western India and noted for his work in the upliftment of widows and the lower castes in India.

The Period of the King of the Great Sacrifice

When Maha Bali Ruled.

Here is a song which we have been singing through generations during the Onam festival.:

"Maveli Nadu Vanidum Kalam
Manusharellarum Onnupole
Amodathode vasikum kalam
apathangarkumottilla thanum
Adhikal Vyadhikal Onnumilla
Bala maranangal Kelkanilla
Kallavumilla Chathivumilla
Ellolamilla Poli Vachanam
Kallaparyum Cheru Nazhiyum
Kallatharangal mattonumilla"

Onam is the only festival which Christians celebrate in common with Hindus – it is the only festival which is celebrated together even by the outcastes, untouchables and the high castes.

It translates as:

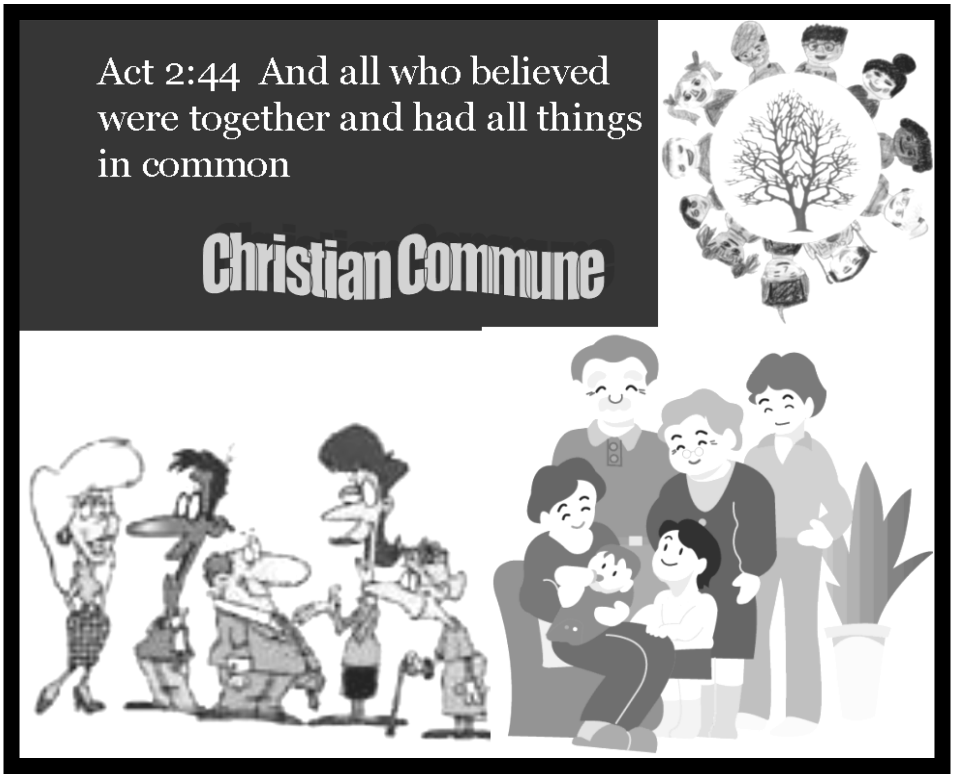
' When Maveli, our King, ruled the land,
All the people were as One.
And people live joyful and merry;
They were all free from harm.
There was neither anxiety nor sickness,
Death of the children were never even heard of,
There were no lies,
There is neither theft nor deceit,
And no one is false in speech either.
Measures and weights were right;
No one cheated or wronged their neighbor.
When Maveli, our King, ruled the land,
All the peoples formed one casteless race.'



The Onam festival lasts for ten-days and falls during the harvest season. It is celebrated with much pomp and gaiety. People decorate their yards with carpets of fresh flowers called 'Pookalam' to welcome the King Mahabali. They wear new dresses and perform communal dances such as Thiruvathirakali and Thumbi Tullal. Thiuruvonam the climax comes on the fourth day of Onam when sumptuous meals are eaten with the whole family sitting together along with those who are less fortunate. The ten days are meant for feasting, singing, dancing and making merry with friends family and neighbors. The whole community come together for floral decorations, elephant processions, dance performances, classical and folk music recitals, cultural pageants and water carnivals

A veritable Kingdom of God in the fashion of the early Christian community in Jerusalem was in existence under the Christian Kingdom of Maha Bali. If we can trust the archeology, it lasted until at least sixth or even to the eighth Century AD. These periods were totally blacked out from history by destroying documents and they survive only in the memory of the community as legends and myth.

Mahabali was a Christian King; and may be dated before 6th century. This Kingdom was at least partially destroyed by deceit by the entry of heresy. In this conquest all territories except Kerala was lost to the Christians.



Mahabali, the Asura King

Hindu Puranas describe Mahabali as an Asura King. Here is what Madame Blavatsky the great Theosophist Gnostic has to say about the meaning of Asura.

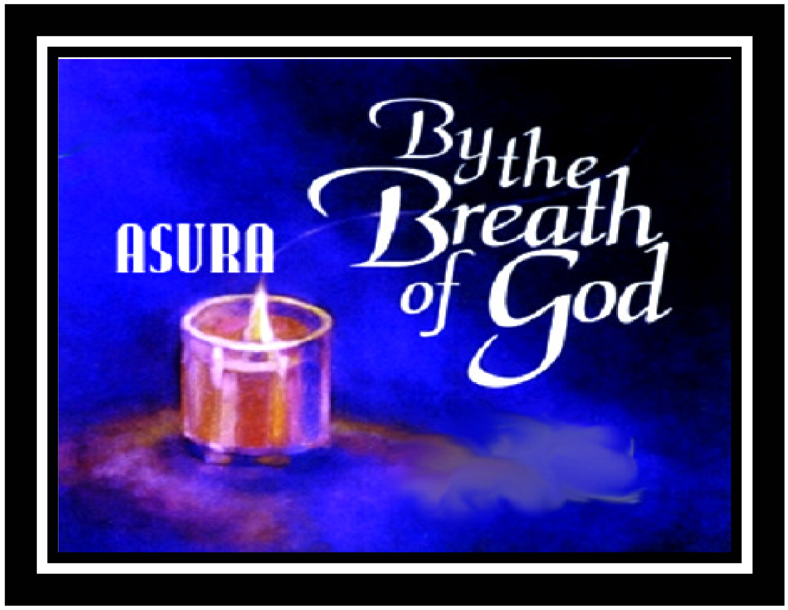
"Mahabali was an Asura King who was defeated by the Suras by trick. In the Rig-Veda, the Asuras are shown as spiritual, divine beings. Their etymology is

The South Indian Asura community were those "who were born of the breath of God"

"The Great Sacrifice" was the Asura King who conquered the three worlds

derived from *asu* (breath), the "Breath of God," thus, Asuras are those who were created by the breath of God, who has the Holy Spirit within them.

It is later on, after Brahminic domination, they are shown issuing from Brahma's thigh, and that their name began to be derived from "*a*", primitive, and *sura*, god (solar deities), which is interpreted as "not-a-god."
(Madame H. P. Blavatsky in `The Secret Doctrine', II, 59
Blaviatsky was the originator of theosophy.)



The word *asura* is formed from the word *asu* with the addition of the suffix *ra* and means 'one full of *ra* spiritual life i.e., *asu* and 'by curious process of semantical change came to mean a demon.' Pt. Satya Vrat - Ramayana - A Linguistic Study

The Asuras

"The asuras "are the sons of the primeval Creative Breath at the beginning of every new Maha Kalpa, or Manvantara; in the same rank as the Angels who had remained 'faithful.' These *were the allies* of *Soma* (the parent of the *Esoteric Wisdom*) as against *Brishaspati* (representing ritualistic or *ceremonial* worship).

Evidently they have been degraded in Space and Time into opposing powers or demons by the ceremonialists, on account of their rebellion against hypocrisy, sham-worship, and the dead-letter form"
(Secret Doctrines 2:500).
Theosophical Society - Madam Blavinsky.

In fact the Puranas give the whole genealogy of Mahabali which is very interesting and instructive.

Genealogy of Maha Bali

Genealogy of Maha Bali in the puranas also asserts the similar origin. Here Maha Bali is the descendant of the two gate keepers of heaven known as Jaya & Vijaya– (meaning Victor and Great Victor – Those who overcome – The Overcomers) They were forced into incarnation on earth due to the curse of the Sages because they would not allow these sages to enter the presence of god. Jaya was born as Kasyapa.

In pre-Vedic times, Kasyapa was a primordial god. He was the father of the Devas (Suras - gods), the Asuras (demons – Breath of God), the Nagas (The Serpentines), and the Mankind. His name means tortoise, and he was connected with the cosmic tortoise which made up the universe.

In Vedic times Kasyapa had Aditi as his consort, and he was the father of the Adityas (literally means the Suns). In later times he became equated with Prajapati (Means "Lord of Hosts") and Brahma (the Creator), and was also named as one of the Rishis (sages).

He had two sons Hiranyakshu and Hiranya Kasipu (Meaning the Golden Eye and the Golden Dress). They were Demon (Dravidian) Kings. Both were killed by two incarnations of Vishnu possibly **indicating the destruction of Christianity in the North and Middle India.** Hiranyaksha was killed by the Boar Incarnation and Hiranya Kasipu by the Lion- Man Incarnation of Vishnu. Hiranya Kasipu was killed at the betrayal of his own son Prahalada who became a Vaishnavite. Maha Bali was the great grand son of Hiranya Kasipu. He was also defeated by Vishnu in the Vamana incarnation. So here we have a series of pictures of struggle by the Vaishanavites to destroy the teachings of the Asuras.(Christian?).

It is on the basis of such vast associations and puranas that I presume that Mahabali was indeed a Christian King, or the generic name for "Christians", whose Kingdom covered the whole three worlds. What are these three worlds? Were they the three Dravidian Kingdoms of Chola, Chera and Pandya? Were they the whole of south, middle and north Indias? Were they the whole world or cosmos?

Kasyapa **Aditi**

Two sons

HIRANYA KSHA

'Golden eye.'

killed by Vishnu in the Boar incarnation



Mahakuta, Deccan 7th C.

HIRANYA KASIPU

'Golden dress.'
A Daitya who, according to the Mahabharata and the Puranas, obtained from **Siva** the sovereignty of the three worlds for a million of years

He was slain by Vishnu in the Narasinha, or man-lion incarnation.

↓

PRAHALADA

↓

VIROCHANA

↓

MAHABALI

This genealogy explains the on going mythical history of The Vaishnavite Struggle with Historic Christianity over a period of six centuries.

If this conjecture is correct, then the stories of the Boar incarnation and Lion-man incarnation of Vishnu tells the story of how the generations of the Christians before Mahabali were driven out from Northern India. This is exactly what we find in terms of geography and order of Vishnu's incarnation.

Since the concept of Avatar came with Thomas and absorbed into Brahminic syncretic form, the number of Avatars were being constantly added. There are basically five lists. However we will take only those that are found common in all the traditions since we can assume they are the original basic incarnations. Look at the following list.

HARI VAMSA (6 Avatars)	**NARAYANI AKHYAN (10 Avatars)**	**VARAHA PURANA (10 Avatars)**	**VAYU PURANA (12 Avatars)**	**BHAGAWAT PURANA (21 Avatars)**
1)Varaha,	1)Hansa,	1)Kurma,	**1)Narasimha,**	1)Sanat Kumar,
2)Narasimha,	2)Kurma,	2)Matsya,	**2)Vaman,**	**2)Boar,**
3)Vaman,	3)Matsya,	**3)Varaha,**	**3)Varaha,**	3)Nara-Narayan,
4)Parashuram,	**4)Varaha,**	**4)Narasimha,**	4)Kurma,	4)Kapila,
5)Rama,	**5)Narasimha,**	**5)Vaman,**	5)Sangram,	5)Dattatreya,
6)Krishna	**6)Vaman,**	**6)Parashuram,**	6)Adivaka,	6)Jadna,
	7)Parashuram,	**7)Rama**,	7)Tripurari,	7)Rashabha,
	8)Rama,	8)Krishna,	8)Andhakarah,	8)Prithi,
	9)Krishna,	9)Buddha,	9)Dhvaja,	9)Matsya,
	10)Kalki	10)Kalki	10)Varta,	10)Kurma,
			11)Halahal,	11)Dhanwantari,
			12)Kolhahal	12)Mohini,
				13)Narasimha,
				14)Vaman,
				15)Parashuram,
				16)Ved Vyas,
				17)Naradeo,
				18)Rama,
				19)Krishna,
				20)Buddha,
				21)Kalki

So the common basic incarnations of Vishnu were five, Viz. 1)Varaha, 2)Narasimha, 3)Vaman, 4)Parashuram, 5)Rama.



We can actually see the sequence of Vaishanavite conquest in the figure.

Avatar	**Dravida Asura King killed**
1. Boar (Varaha)	Hiranyaksha
2. Man-Lion (Narasimha)	HiranyaKasipu (Brother of Hiranyaksha)
3 Dwarf (Vamana)	Maha Bali (King of Dravida) great grandson of HiranyaKasipu
4. Parasu Rama (Rama with the axe)	Lifting Kerala out of the sea and giving to Brahmins
5. Rama	Ravana – The King of Sri Lanka Ravana was a great-grandson of Mahabali.

First of all we notice that all the incarnations were Vishnu incarnations. Hence they are a history connected with the Vaishnavite traditions and, it is the history which tells how Vaishnavism defeated their opponents.

The opponents were all Daityas – who are usually considered as Dravidian Kings and Kingdoms

Second all the victims were of one family coming from one lineage.

The placement of the events are also interesting.

NAME OF DAITYA	AVATAR	GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION
Hiranyksha	Boar (Varaha)	no indication given in any Puranas
Hiranya Kasipu (Brother of Hiranyksha)	Narasimha (Man-Lion)	Indus Valley
Maha Bali (Great grand son of Hiranya Kasipu)	Vamana (Dwarf)	All of South India – Narmada River to Cape Comorin including Chola, Chera and Pandya
Keralaputras (of the Kingdom of Maha Bali)	Parasu Rama (Rama with the Axe)	Kerala (Chera)
Ravana (Grand Son of Maha Bali)	Rama	Sri Lanka

15

THE MYTH OF PRESTER JOHN

This myth of the Maha Bali is not only found in Indian Puranas (Old Stories) but also in the Western stories as the myth of Prestor John. Prestor John is a legendary medieval Christian priest and king thought to have reigned over a Christian kingdom in the Far East. During the period of Crusades letters arrived in Rome from Prestor John.

The first written record of Prester John is found in 1158 CE in the Chronicles of Otto, Bishop of Freising.. The legend of the Three Holy Kings by Johannes of Hildesheim, (Historia Trium Regum by Johannes of Hildesheim, Sylvia Clare Harris, 1931, pub. London 1954) written in 1378, tells of St. Thomas as the Apostle of India and of the three rulers, Melciur, Balthazar and Gaspar, They and the entire subjects were converted to the Way. After the martyrdom of Thomas, the three kings had their subjects elect a patriarch under the title of Mar Thoma to be their spiritual leader, and a temporal leader with the title of Prester John. Patriarch Thomas and Prester John ruled over India.

The letters, said to have been written by Prestor John explains, that Prester John ruled a huge Christian kingdom in the East, comprising the "three Indias." His letters told of his crime-free and vice-free peaceful kingdom, where "honey flows in our land and milk everywhere abounds." (Kimble, 130) Prester John also "wrote" that he was besieged by infidels and barbarians and he needed the help of Christian European armies. In 1177, Pope Alexander III sent his friend Master Philip to find Prester John; he never did.

THE LETTER OF PRESTOR JOHN

The following letter was presented to Pope Alexander and Emperor Manuel Comnenus of Byzantium in 1165 AD by an Ambassador of Prestor John.

"John the Presbyter, by the grace of God and the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, king of kings and lord of lord, to his friend Manuel, Governor of the Byzantines, greetings, wishing good health and the continued enjoyment of that divine blessing…….

"Our magnificence dominates the Three Indias, and extends to Farthest India, where the body of St. Thomas the Apostle rests. It reaches through the desert toward the place on the rising of the sun, and continues through the valley of deserted Babylon close by the Tower of Babel. Seventy-two provinces obey us, a few of which are Christian provinces, and each has it own king. And all their kings are our tributaries.

"In our territories are found elephants, dromedaries, and camels, and almost every kind of beast that is under heaven. Honey flows in our land, and milk everywhere abounds. In one of our territories no poison can do harm and no noisy frog croaks, no scorpions are there, and no serpents creep through the grass. No venomous reptiles can exist there or use their deadly power…..

"For gold, silver, precious stones, beasts of every kind, and the numbers of our people, we believe that we are unequaled under heaven. There are no poor among us, we receive all strangers and pilgrims, thieves and robbers are not found in our land, nor do we have adultery or avarice.

"When we ride forth to war, our troops are preceded by thirteen huge and lofty crosses made of gold and ornamented with precious stones, instead of banners, and each of these is followed by ten thousand mounted soldiers and one hundred thousand infantrymen, not counting those who have charge of the baggage and provisions…

"The palace in which our sublimity dwells is built after the pattern of that which the apostle Thomas erected for King Gundafor...The ceilings, pillars, and architecture are of shittimwood. The roof is of ebony, which cannot be inured by fire. …

"…In our hall there dines daily, at our right hand, twelve archbishops, and at our left, twenty bishops, and also the Patriarch of St. Thomas, the Protopapao of Samarkand, and the Archprotopapao of Susa, in which city the throne of our glory and our imperial palace are situated…

"…that the Creator over all things, having made us the most supreme and the most glorious over all immortals, does not give us a higher title than that of presbyter,

The Realm of Prester John, Robert Silverberg, Doubleday & Co., NY 1972



In a detailed study on the subject, Prester John:: Fiction and History, Meir Bar-Ilan comes to the conclusion that :
"Evidence emerging clearly from the text will immediately show that Prester John lived in India, or to be more precise, in Malabar (southern India)".

Whether fiction, forgery or a memory of history the legend of Prestor John directs to Mahabali type of Kingdom in Kerala.

Whether fiction, forgery or a memory of history the legend directs to Mahabali type of Kingdom in Kerala. We should remember that there existed a Christian Kingdom of VillarVattom near Cochin until the coming of the Portugese.

Quotes from

Prester John: Fiction and History

Meir Bar-Ilan

It is believed that the historical nucleus of the story is rooted in the coming of one 'John, the Patriarch of the Indians', who came to Rome in the pontificate of Calixtus II in 1122. From the middle of the 12th century onward it was accepted in Europe that Prester John, king and priest, was a ruler over territories in the East, though the area of his reign was not precisely defined. It is not an easy task to separate fiction and history in this legend, …..

I. Where Prester John Resided: India or Ethiopia

The former editors of the letters of Prester John, E. Ullendorff and C. F. Beckingham still wonder where Prester John lived. On page 10 they write:

The Hebrew letters give no indication of identifying Prester John with the ruler of Ethiopia.

Though it is true that Ethiopia is not mentioned in the letters, it will be seen later that this statement is misleading. The editors for their part are consistent: in pp. 32-33 they present a Latin text with its Hebrew translation (and an English text where the Latin is missing) as follows:
Praete janni invenitur ascendendo in Kalicut in arida... and this is true proof and well-known knowledge about the Jews who are found there near Prester John...

…… Evidence emerging clearly from the text will immediately show that Prester John lived in India, or to be more precise, in Malabar (southern India).

Connecting Prester John with India is inevitable from the Hebrew text on the one hand, while data from the legend will support the Indian origin on the other.

First of all, **India is mentioned several times in these letters** (pp. 41, 89, 107, 119, and more).

Second, **Kalicut** which was one of the most important port-cities in Malabar in southern India (the place where Vasco da Gama was sent), **is mentioned in one of the letters**.

Third, these facts would definitely suffice but further evidence appears in the form of statement:

“ and in **the large India is buried the body of St. Thomas the Apostle**.
That is, the author knew that St. Thomas was buried in India, a belief held by the Christians of southern India. Not only that, but the author of the letters knew (p. 133) about 'St. Thomas holiday', that is, apparently, **St. Thomas memorial day held by the same Christians on July 3rd.**”

Fourth, the author of the letters mentioned **that pepper grew in his land** (pp. 55, 91, 131), vegetation typical to Malabar in southern India, and not to Ethiopia.

Fifth, there are some stories in the letters concerning warriors riding elephants (pp. 71, 101, 123). It is well known that **unlike the African elephant only the Asian elephant could be trained.** That is to say that the letters include information about India (with which the West is more familiar than it is with Burma or Siam where trained elephants live as well), and has nothing to do with Ethiopia.

Hence, after studying all the features independently and then together it is inevitable to reach the unquestionable conclusion that Prester John hailed from India. That is: the letters of Prester John tell a story about India, not Ethiopia, and it is unfortunate that legendary medieval opinions have survived and can still be found in modern scholarship.

…. the confusion between India and Ethiopia is ancient, … This naive European confusion of two different countries (so far from each other), was enhanced by traders from eastern Africa (Somali and Ethiopia), who sold goods without revealing that they were middlemen only. For example, in Ancient Rome many thought that cinnamon was imported from eastern Africa, though it actually came from India.

Apparently, this confusion persisted as a result of the fact that both in India and Ethiopia, 'eastern' Christians lived in their own kingdom, surrounded by pagans. And, if this is not enough to confuse any medieval man whose geographical knowledge was limited anyhow, there is another fact that adds to the confusion: the letters of Prester John tell about black priests. For example: '...about the Jews... as we have heard all the time from the black priests who have come and are coming daily' (p. 33). Any layman might associate these black priests with Africa, without knowing that a major part of the population in southern India is black. Since Christians lived there, it would not be unreasonable to assume that black priests lived there as well (it should be kept in mind that the Jewish community in Cochin, on the coast of Malabar, was divided into 'white' and 'black' Jews).

However, in the Middle Ages it was not known where Prester John lived, and adventurers went looking for him. In the 13th century Marco Polo identified Prester John with the Khan of the Kereit, a tribe in Mongolia which was then Nestorian Christian. Others continued searching for him in China. In the 15th century the Portugese looked for Prester John all over Africa, when others were sure that the legendary king was living in Ethiopia. In the middle of the 16th century the King of Ethiopia was nicknamed 'Prester John' by the Europeans, and it should be noted that the description of the search for Prester John reads like a detective story. Apparently, in the 17th century, after the Europeans had learned that there was no one by the name of Presterr John living in Ethiopia, the story was abandoned and considered a legend until the beginning of historical research in the 19th century.

Whatever the facts were, it is important to stress that **according to the Hebrew letters of Prester John, there is no doubt that he lived in India**. If it was not known until then, probably because experts in the subject concentrated on retracing the medieval search for Prester John, thus disregarding the geographical facts appearing in the letters, and failing to analyze the Hebrew letters with the necessary care.

…….Another example of evidence that connects Prester John in India to Italy is seen in the famous Hebrew book *Igeret Orhot Olam*, written by Abraham Farissol (1452-1528) a few years before his death:

In the library I found in chapter 58 of the second part of the book (F. Montalboddo, *Paesi Novamente Retrovati) E Novo Mondo* (etc., Milano 1508) that from Lisbon the capital of Portugal to Kalicut in Asia, the beginning of India there are 3800 parasangs... and in that chapter it is explicit that Praeti Jiani (=Prester John) is beyond Kalicut in the land far from the sea. And this is real evidence and famous knowledge concerning the Jews that dwell there near Praeti Jiani as we have already heard all our lives from black brothers that come every day and tell in clarity the presence of many Jews with them. Of these brothers there are in Rome a sect of some thirty of them dwelling in a new stage (monastery) established for them.

That is, in the **16th century a learned Rabbi from Ferrara identified the place of Prester John in the vicinity of Kalicut (Malabar, India), with the help of an Italian book**. Whatever were Farissol's ideas concerning identification of the Jews under Prester John with the lost ten tribes, he was right in his conclusion that in the Kalicut area there were Jews, those who are known today as the Jews of Cochin.

http://faculty.biu.ac.il/~barilm/presjohn.html

16

THE SECOND VAISHNAVITE CONQUEST

THE PARASURAMA MYTH



The Legend of Parasurama

Parasuram was the sixth incarnation of Vishnu. The word Parasu means 'axe' in Sanskrit and therefore the name Parasuram means 'Ram with Axe'.

The aim of his birth was to deliver the world from the arrogant oppression of the ruling caste, the Kshatriyas. He killed all the male Kshatriyas on earth and filled five lakes with their blood.

After destroying the Kshatriya kings, he approached an assembly of learned men to find a way of penitence for his sins. He was advised that, to save his soul from damnation, he must hand over the lands he had conquered to the Brahmins. He did as they advised and sat in meditation at Gokarnam. There, he was blessed by Varuna - the God of the Oceans and Bhumidevi - Goddess of Earth.

From Gokarnam he reached Kanyakumari and threw his axe northward across the ocean. All the region from Kanykumari and Gokarnam emerged from under the sea. He brought in 64 Brahmin families and gave this land of Kerala to them.

The Parasurama-legend is found in the Mahabharata; the Puranas; Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa (Sanskrit drama canto 4. verse 53); the Thiruvalangad plates of Rajendra Chola (1012-1044) and the 18th century Keralolpati history in Malayalam.



Vamana was able to push down Maha Bali to Patala Loka – the lowest regions of India – to Kerala. The Christian dominion was thus restricted to the region of the Cheras.

The legend of Parasurama explains the final Brahmin conquest of Kerala well after the sixth C AD and speaks of the coming of the Brahmins into Kerala taking over the country. This process was a contrived series of migration from the North to the South along the west coast of India.

The Kerala Government Website gives the following historical note:

"By about the 8th century, a chain of thirty two Brahmin settlements had come up, which eventually paved the way for the social, cultural and political separation of Kerala from the Tamil country, in due course. ….. **The revival of the Chera kingdom** was actually **a byproduct of the Aryan Brahmin settlements** and assumption of the socio-political dominance they had established. The Perumal was the Lord of Mahodayapura and the overlord of Kerala (Keraladhinatha). But his sovereignty was constrained by the preexisting power of the Brahmin settlements and the hereditary chieftains.

http://www.kerala.gov.in/history&culture/earlyhistory.htm

Thus the supremacy of Christians began to vane soon after the sixth century when the Brahmins immigrated into Kerala and dominated the country. We are not sure of the social process involved. One of the major reason was the taking up of arms by the Brahmin youth as mentioned in the historical records of the Namboodiri Brahmins. Parasurama himself was a Brahmin who took up the axe – a Brahmin who became a Warrior. It is this heritage that Parasurama Brahmins brought into Kerala. If Vamana conquest used subtle deceit, Parasurama conquest used direct muscle power by secret training of youths into martial arts within the temple. Particular reference is to be made to the Chatters which literally means people meant for death - a suicide squad.

The Suicide Squads of Brahmins

"Known variously as the Chatter or Chattirar, these arms-bearing Brahmanans are seen in records from different parts of India from the post-Gupta period onwards. It is from Kerala that we have the clearest information about them. We hear about the significant institutions called Salais, which imparted military training to these Brahmanan youth in different parts of Kerala - some of them had been looked upon by the neighbouring rulers as a veritable military threat to them.,….. In any case, Namboothiris had become a significant economic, social and political force by the time the Chera Perumals were ruling over Kerala. This justifies the statement of a modern historian that the polity under the Cheras of Mahodayapuram was in reality a Brahmanan oligarchy and that the Brahmanans constituted the real power behind the throne.

In fact, the statements in Keralolpathi as well as other historical sources, that it was the Brahmanans who put the Chera king on the throne, mean the same thing. " Namboothiri Website Trust

Dr. Kesavan Veluthat : http://www.namboothiri.com/articles/history.htm

The Jihad Training

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna, a 22-year-old elementary school teacher, as an Islamic revivalist movement following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent ban of the caliphate system of government that had united the Muslims for hundreds of years. Al-Banna based his ideas that Islam was not only a religious observance, but a comprehensive way of life, on the tenets of Wahhabism, better known today as "Islamism", and he supplemented the traditional Islamic education for the Society's male students with jihadia training. http://www.alquedatrainingmanual.com/

Thus we can see that there is great truth in the Parasurama Axe legend. The Brahmins formed a terrorist training ground within the temples inside Chera empire itself (similar to the al-Queda, Hamas and Hezbolla of today with suicide battalions. Techniques has not changed) The Parasu Rama conquest was a subtle military guerilla conquest of Brahminic Army, where Parasu Rama raised the Kerala Coast out of “the sea” and handed it over to the Brahmins.. (Even in modern India this religious based guerilla trainings are organized by the Siva Sena (Army of Siva) in Bombay and the Rashtiya SwayamSeva Sangh (RSS) (Political Self Serving Group) to fight the Christians and the muslims.) By the eighth century, Brahmins came to control villages centered around a temple taking over large masses of land. They became Land Lords and Priests and the local villagers became Adiyars (Serfs).

The present Brahmin families (gotras) trace their origin only from the sixth century AD the descendants of the families brought in by Parasurama. Until then Brahmins did not exist in Kerala. The small faction of Brahmins who were present at the time when Thomas arrived in the Kerala coast, embraced the Way and they remain as teachers of the Word even to this day.

The Nairs – the warrior caste - as a caste, appear on the scene as late as the 12thC AD. They came from the North is certain. In the later years, Nairs were made the ruling class in Kerala by the Brahmins. Brahmins then relegated to the priesthood profession within the temple controlling the vast landed property. It was from this time onwards that we see the presence of idols and the temples in Kerala. What is interesting is that soon after the eclipse of the Kalbhras, the Second Chera Empire made its appearance in the annals of Kerala history. Mahodyapuram (modern Kodangallur) was its capital. It was founded by Kulasekhara Alvar (A.D. 800-820), one of the 12 Alvars. Alvars were Tamil saints who composed and sang hymns in praise of Vishnu. They were exponents of the Bhakti (devotional) cult in South India. The Alvars gave a great impetus to the Bhakti cult in South India between the seventh and the tenth centuries. Thus the Gnostic concept of Vishnu swallowed Isa. Instead Vishnu incarnates now and then to destroy the Isanuvadikal (the followers of Isa)

17

KERALA : GOD'S OWN COUNTRY

Thus we can see that the History of Kerala differed considerably from the rest of India. Here I try to summarize the history of Kerala as best as we can solve the puzzle. The Christians of Kerala – the Nasranis – the followers of Nazarene remained within the Historical Christianity, even when the rest of India went Gnostic and eventually to Hinduism. This was essentially because it was open to the world through the sea and were always in total communion with the rest of the Universal Christian Churches in Rome, Antiochia, Alexandria and others.

During the second visit of Apostle Thomas to Kerala, all the existing Brahminic communities (which were few) embraced Christianity along with large number of others. Budhism and Jainim coexisted with Christians for a long long time. As a result there were no Brahminic tradition in Kerala before the sixth century AD. On the otherhand there is a group of Christians who trace their origin from these original Brahmin families.

The history of Kerala from first century to the sixth century is shrouded in mystery and is available only in myths and legends. This part of the history was deliberately wiped out by the Brahminic vested interest of later period and is known as the Kalabhrah Interregnum – the Dark Age of the Kerala Sons. However, the communal memory of the period presents itself as myths and festivals. Two such myths – The Vamana and Mahabali myth and the Parasurama myth are of importance Vamana's defeat of Mahabali is historically placed earlier than the Parasurama story of creation of Kerala from the sea. On the first look, they seem to contradict each other since Kerala would not have been in existence before it was created by Parasu. So evidently we need to look at them from the point of view of Vaishnavite conquest of South India.

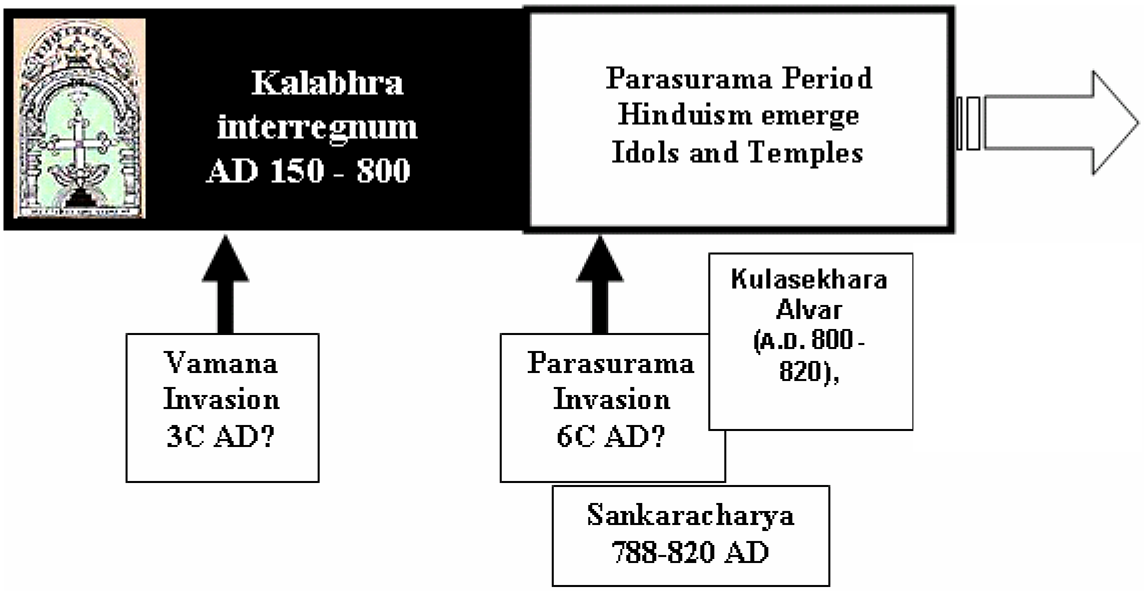
By the end of the first century, Kerala along with most of Dravidia became a Christian country probably by forming a communal system based on theocratic principles, where every one shared whatever they had. The Onam songs indicates that a golden age ensued. Several such communes are mentioned in the reports of foreign traders. Each had an Elder as the head each person serving the other. This is remniscent of the early Christian Communes of Jersusalem and of the period of Judges when God was the King of Israel. Unlike Jerusalem, these continued for several years. The Asuras – the people of the Word became very powerful in the region and was led by a Maha Bali – a Prestor John. "Maha Bali" may have been a title rather than a name or a generic epithet to denote "Christians"

As the Northern Vaishnavism (gnosticism which removed the historical Jesus) pushed downward into Dravidia the Pandya and Chola regions began to fall under the heresy. Thus Kerala became the Christian refuge When persecution of Christians by the Gnostics broke out in southern India, the Puhur Christians - we are told - took the sea route to Kollam and found refuge. When persecution of Christians under the Zorastrians took place in Syria, the Syrian Christians fled to Kerala and found their refuge. Some of the Northern Christians who fled from India to Syria under persecutions also came with the Syrian immigrants.

Providing refuge for persecuted also opened up immigration of Gnostics, because the Zorastrians persecuted both the Christians and the Gnostics. This brought in the Gnostic groups along with the Christian groups into Kerala. The Pallava Kingdom which became powerful in South India being of Syrian origin encouraged more gnostic immigrations into that part of India. They came in as traders and settlers.

Mani himself was evangelizing out of Kancheepuram and Mylapore in Madras. It is known that Mani travelled widely in Kerala. The place called Ranni was one of his favorite place of meeting simply because there were many Syrian immigrants who came with Knai Thoma there. It was in this place Mani was confronted by Bardesanes the Syrian Philospher Poet. Though we are not sure what transpired there, Mani did not make much head way in Kerala. Bardesanes was a powerful defender of faith by that time.

Apparently the Christian Churches were not defeated totally by the Vamana deceit. The last bastion of Maha Bali was Kerala. Kerala Christendom lasted until the seventh or eighth century AD. A second conquest under Parasu Rama completed the process. This was when the Brahmins were migrated into Kerala. All Brahminic families of today can trace their orign only later than the sixth century AD, which we can assume to be the period of invasion of Parsu Rama. By the seventh century A.D., with the founding of the first Kerala Brahmin settlements, they subtly transformed the socio-religious heritage of the area. This was accelerated by the formation of Brahminic terrorist military training camps centered around the temples. It was this that eventually created the Kingdoms of Kerala, with Brahmins as Kingmakers. Hinduism came to Kerala only by the eighth century AD with its temples and idols. Sankara, the Advaita Philosopher was born in Kerala around the same time as the culmination of the Hindu School of thought. Hinduism came to its own only with Sankara. (The official date of Sankara accepted currently is 788-820 AD, and the Government of India celebrated the 1200th anniversary of Sankara's birth in 1988 AD.) Other philosophers followed. Thus by the eighth century the domination of Maha Pillai – the Sons of the King – came to an end and other Hindu castes took over the ruling of Kerala.



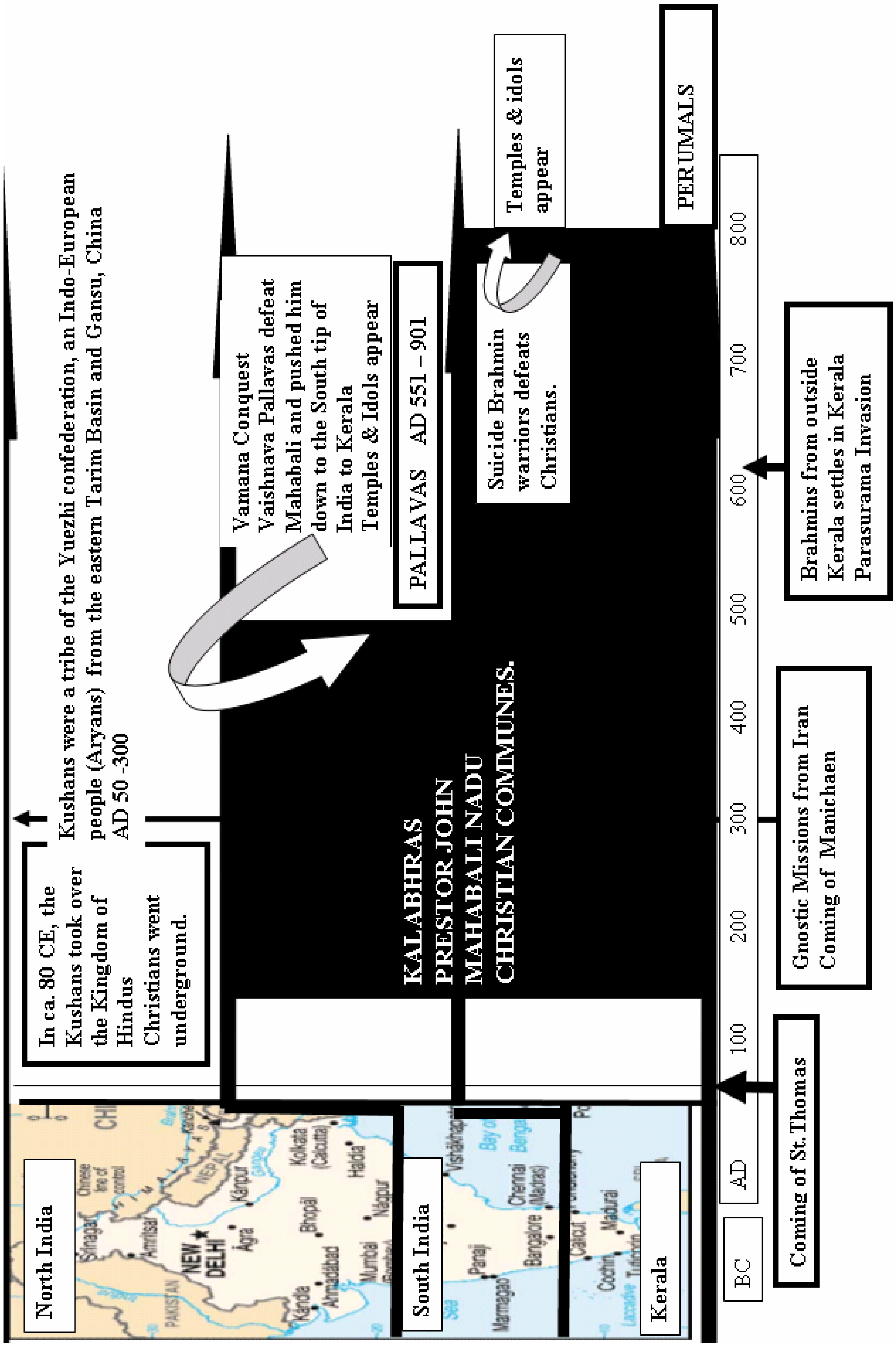
Parashurama is believed to have rooted 64 Brahmin families and divided the land equally amongst them. But they could never agree among themselves, and brought a ruler from outside. These rulers were the Perumals. Each Perumal was appointed for a 12 year term. One of the kings became a Buddhist monk, another, Kulasekara Alwar was a Vaishnavite poet, and the last Perumal, Cheraman converted to Islam divided his Kingdom between his nephews and went to Mecca. He died on the way back, at the port of Zafar, Yemen and his grave is still found in Yemen.

Chronology of Perumaals
(dates vary in documents)

Rama Raja Sekhara (800 - 844 AD).
Sthanu Ravi Kulasekhara (844 - 883 AD),
Kota Ravi Vijayaraga (883 - 913 AD),
Kota Kota Kerala Kesari (913 - 943 AD),
Indu Kota (943 - 962 AD),
Bhaskara Ravi Manukulaaditya (962 - 1021 AD),
Ravi Kota Raajasimha (1021 - 1036 AD),
Raja Raja Ravi Raja Adityan Kota Ranaditya (1036 - 1089 AD)
Rama Kulasekhara (1089 - 1122 AD).

The coming of the colonisers, western missions and western Christian theology and practices have drastically changed the Churches of Kerala. The Portugese, the Dutch, the French and the British discovered the sea routes which allowed them to enter India from the sea, initially as traders and later as colonisers. They brought with them their version of Christianity. Because of their ignorance, they destroyed the local form of Christianity and substituted their own version.

We do not even know the liturgies or the form of original worship of Kerala Christians of the first century. This may be partially because of the burning of all Christian documents by the Portugese when they colonised India. All Indian Christian forms of worship, liturgy and theology were heresy from the point of view of these foreigners. They just destroyed all documents in an attempt to wipe out heresy – but not always without a fight. It was followed by the Syrians, Dutch and the English who then instilled their forms of Christianity in India. The original containers were broken, and new containers took its place, but the contents remained. Even today, a powerful Christian presence continues in Kerala.


North India
South India
Kerala
BC
AD
100
200
300
400
500
600
700
800
In ca. 80 CE, the Kushans took over the Kingdom of Hindus Christians went underground.
Kushans were a tribe of the Yuezhi confederation, an Indo-European people (Aryans) from the eastern Tarim Basin and Gansu, China AD 50 -300
KALABHRAS
PRESTOR JOHN
MAHABALI NADU
CHRISTIAN COMMUNES.
Vamana Conquest
Vaishnava Pallavas defeat Mahabali and pushed him down to the South tip of India to Kerala
Temples & Idols appear
PALLAVAS AD 551 – 901
Suicide Brahmin warriors defeats Christians.
Temples & idols appear
PERUMALS
Coming of St. Thomas
Gnostic Missions from Iran
Coming of Manichaen
Brahmins from outside Kerala settles in Kerala
Parasurama Invasion







Greek Cross Marthoma Cross Russian Cross

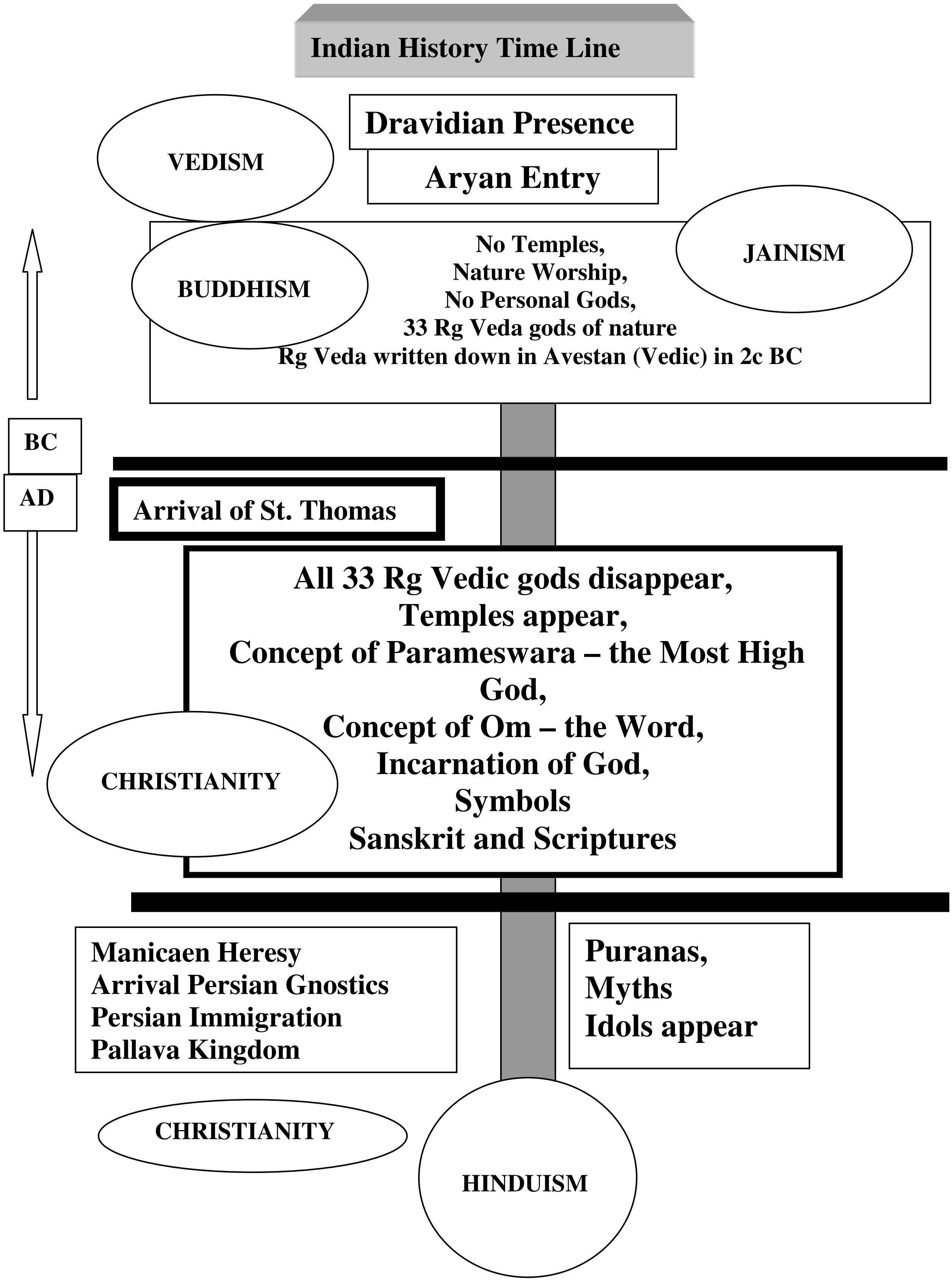
Go ye and preach the Gospel

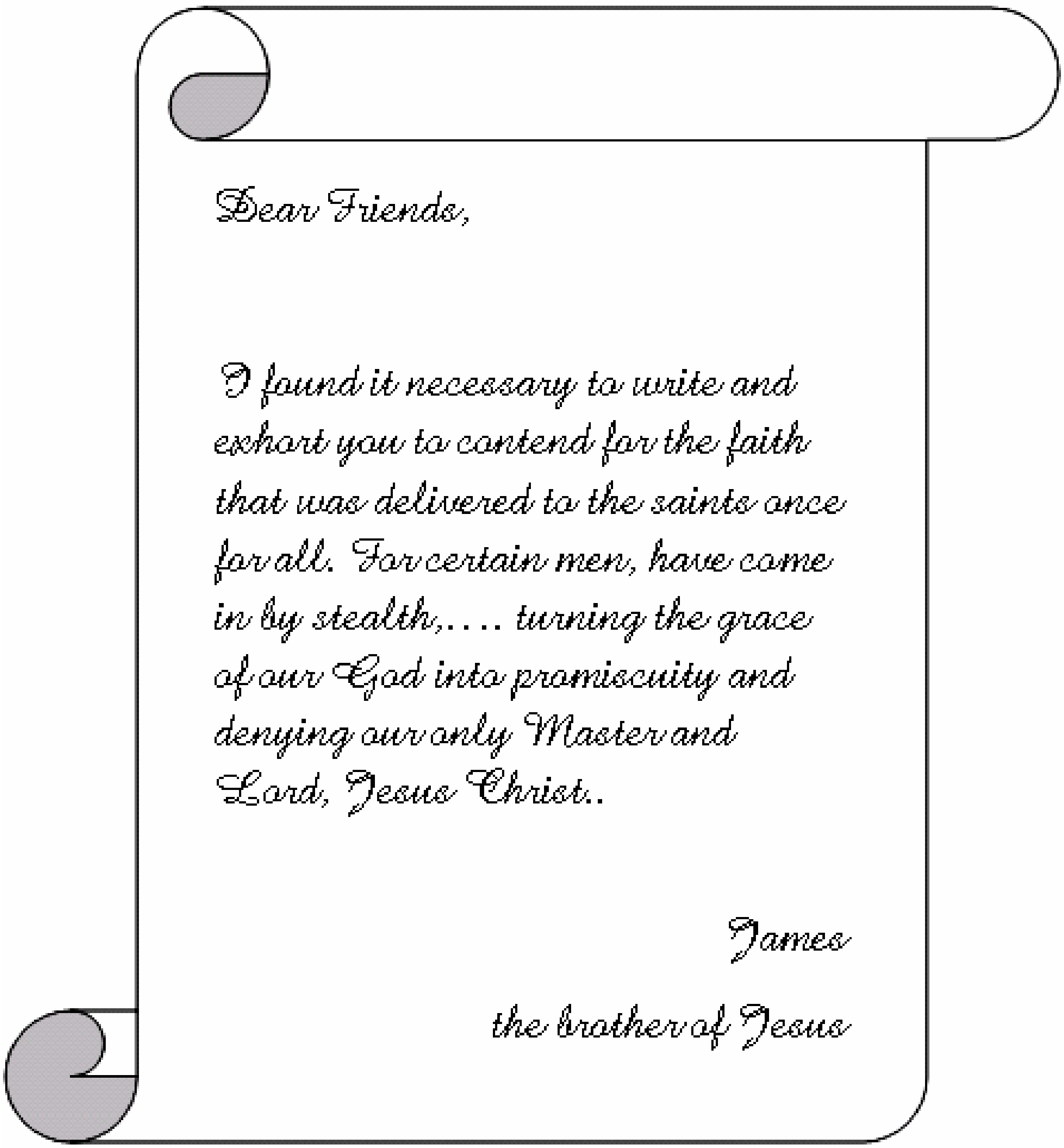
We all have one content.





Byzantine Cross Coptic Cross


Indian History Time Line
VEDISM
Dravidian Presence
Aryan Entry
BUDDHISM
No Temples,
Nature Worship,
No Personal Gods,
33 Rg Veda gods of nature
Rg Veda written down in Avestan (Vedic) in 2c BC
JAINISM
BC
AD
Arrival of St. Thomas
All 33 Rg Vedic gods disappear,
Temples appear,
Concept of Parameswara – the Most High God,
Concept of Om – the Word,
Incarnation of God,
Symbols
Sanskrit and Scriptures
CHRISTIANITY
Manicaen Heresy
Arrival Persian Gnostics
Persian Immigration
Pallava Kingdom
Puranas,
Myths
Idols appear
CHRISTIANITY
HINDUISM



Dear Friends,

I found it necessary to write and exhort you to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all. For certain men, have come in by stealth,…. turning the grace of our God into promiscuity and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ..

James

the brother of Jesus